



# Chevrei Tzedek Congregation (Baltimore, MD)

## Climate Action Plan 2026

### Contact Information:

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### 2026 Climate Action Plan Submitted by:

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### Organization Stats:

Do you own or rent any buildings? If you both own and rent, please answer "Own."	<b>Rent</b>
Are you a landlord or do you manage a campus of buildings?	
How many buildings does your organization rent or own?	1
How are they used? Please consider how they are used and with what frequency.	
<i>Weekly Shabbat morning services, followed by a kiddish and sometimes learning programs ('limmud' -including several related to our CAP). The building is also used for special programs and life cycle events.</i> <i>We use the kitchen facilities and outdoor spaces as well.</i>	
What is the estimated total square footage of all buildings you rent or own?	200
Are you planning to renovate or engage in new construction in the next 3 years?	<i>Not Sure</i>
Approximately how many people actively participate in your programs, including prayer services (virtual or in-person)?	50
Approximately how large is your digital audience?	900

## Source Clean Electricity

### What actions have you taken, and/or are you going to take, to source clean electricity?

We rent and the building sourced clean electricity.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We rent and advocated for the landlord to source clean electricity	<i>In process</i>
We educated our remote workforce about purchasing clean electricity for their home.	<i>Not currently planning</i>

**Additional Information:** We are involved in an ongoing campaign for the community to sign up for Neighborhood Sun. This has included frequent reminders at services, entries in our weekly email, and information on our website. Our NS liaison participated in our Green Mitzvathon Environmental Fair. We will continue to encourage carpooling and other approaches and behaviors that limit or reduce the climate impact of transportation for shul events. We continue to have discussions with the Myerberg Center as how we can best work together on climate issues.

# Go Electric/Fuel Switching

**What actions have you taken, and/or are you going to take, to switch your building's appliances, equipment, and/or vehicles to electric?**

Do you own any equipment that burns fossil fuels, e.g. vehicles or stoves? (If yes, **FALSE** answer the five questions below.)

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We took an inventory of our appliances, equipment, and/or vehicles, noting which use fossil fuels, the year they'll reach end of functional use, and made a timeline to replace with electric versions.

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We electrified our HVAC (heating, ventilation, air conditioning).

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We electrified our water heaters.

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We electrified other equipment.

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We planned to switch to all electric but were derailed and purchased fossil fuel equipment this year.

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We rent and the building is all electric. **In process**

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We rent and advocated with our landlord to fuel switch. **Not currently planning**

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We educated our remote workforce about going electric/fuel switching. **Not currently planning**

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**Additional Information:** *We provided information about home green audits and incentives for individual homeowners to learn about and implement upgrading to electric.*

# Energy Efficiency

## What steps have you taken and/or are you going to take to reduce energy use at your facilities?

Are you responsible for maintaining equipment in your space, e.g. replacing light bulbs, motion sensors, or appliances? (if yes, answer the four questions below.)

*FALSE*

We switched to LED bulbs.

We installed motion detectors for lighting (if religious observance allows).

We installed and used programmable thermostats to optimize settings for energy use and comfort.

We installed energy-efficient appliances.

### Additional Information:

# Transportation

## What actions have you taken and/or are you going to take to reduce GHG emissions associated with transportation?

We provided public transit and biking instructions, along with EV charging and carpool resources, when available, on our website and communications for how to get to our site.

*Want to learn more*

We implemented programs and incentives that encourage staff and members to commute via public transit, carpool, biking, or walking.

*In process*

We limited staff or participant air travel to programs, events, and conferences; and/or we did virtual engagement; and/or bundled objectives when travel was needed.

*Not currently planning*

### Additional Information:

**Do you serve food? If yes, please complete the three sections below.**

**Yes**

## Food We Serve

**What steps have you taken and/or are you going to take to reduce GHG emissions associated with the food you serve?**

We had vegetarian options at all meals	<i>Continuous</i>
We exclusively served vegetarian or pescatarian food (no meat, but did serve dairy, fish, and/or eggs).	<i>In process</i>
We eliminated industrially-raised beef and lamb from all meals.	
We have a food policy that addresses climate impacts.	<i>Continuous</i>
We advocated for more plant-based options with local caterers, our food distributor, and/or other outside food providers.	<i>Continuous</i>

**Additional Information:** *For our regular Kiddushes after Shabbat services, sponsors do their own shopping. Our new policy strongly encourages a move towards plant based food. We never serve meat at Kiddush, but some people do bring fish and eggs sometimes. This is a work in progress: the CAP Advisory Group will be helping to make plant based options more accessible to Kiddush sponsors. This year the shul served chicken for one Friday night dinner, with a vegetarian option. We hope to reduce even that amount of meat that is served.*

## Minimize Food Waste

**What actions have you taken and/or are you going to take to reduce the amount of food waste that is generated?**

We conducted a food waste audit.	<i>Continuous</i>
We have a food waste policy.	<i>Continuous</i>
We took steps to reduce food waste created on the catering/kitchen side.	<i>Continuous</i>
We took steps to reduce food waste in the dining area.	<i>Continuous</i>

**Additional Information:** *We are very careful about not opening items until needed, storing food properly, and not leaving perishable items in the refrigerator, since we are only there once a week.*

## Food Waste Emissions

**What steps have you taken and/or are you going to take to reduce GHG emissions associated with food waste going to the landfill?**

We gave surplus food to people.	<i>Continuous</i>
We gave surplus food to animals.	<i>Continuous</i>
We composted surplus food (onsite or off-site).	<i>In process</i>

**Additional Information:** *We have had events where individual members have taken on the responsibility to take home composting. We are prepared to initiate a composting program for the building once construction is completed at the Myerberg. Congregants regularly take leftover food home at the end of our events- we have made a paradigm shift that is it a positive thing to take food home. We are also being careful about opening items as needed, putting out less food, etc.*

*Do you maintain any outdoor space on your property, e.g. lawns, parking lots, woodlands, etc.? If yes, please complete the section below.*

**No**

## Nature-based Solutions

**What actions have you taken and/or are you going to take to reduce the GHG emissions released from, and maximize the carbon sequestered by, natural spaces and resources you manage (e.g., lawns, woodlots, forests, waterways)?**

We assessed our facility's grounds to understand current land use.

We planted additional trees on our property.

We reduced lawn by converting lawn to native plantings, rain gardens, and/or sustainable food gardens/farms.

We managed our landscape, including lawns, without fossil-fuel powered equipment.

We managed our landscape, including lawns, without using chemical fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides.

We converted impermeable surfaces to green infrastructure, such as bioswales.

We restored degraded ecosystems on our property such as waterways, wetlands, and/or woodlots.

We sequestered carbon through other nature-based technologies, e.g. biochar production, composting toilets.

How many additional trees did you plant on your grounds since 2000?

How many acres of lawn have you eliminated since 2000?

**Additional Information:**

## Offset Emissions You Can't Reduce

**What steps have you taken and/or are you going to take to offset the GHG emissions produced from your operations, such as flying, use of fossil fuels in buildings, and programs?**

We categorized our GHG emissions.

*Not currently planning*

We measured our GHG emissions by category.

*Not currently planning*

We offset our GHG emissions.

*Not currently planning*

**Additional Information:**

# Education and Nature Connection

## What steps have you taken and/or are you going to take to incorporate climate education and nature connection into your organizational work?

Produced programming for our staff and/or constituents about implementing climate action solutions in their homes and communities.	<i>Continuous</i>
Produced programming or other opportunities for our staff and/or constituents about nature connection.	<i>Continuous</i>
Developed staff or community capacity through training/professional development to incorporate nature connection and/or climate action.	<i>Completed</i>
Publicized our climate action work to our networks and community, e.g. through newsletters, social media, press.	<i>Continuous</i>
Encouraged organizations within our network to join the Coalition.	<i>Continuous</i>

**Additional Information:** *In May 2025, our community held a Green Mitzvathon that engaged congregants in collective climate action grounded in Jewish values. Participants committed to and completed a wide range of environmentally focused mitzvot, including reducing household energy use, adopting more sustainable food practices, supporting local environmental initiatives, and learning about climate justice. The Mitzvathon strengthened community engagement, raised awareness of practical steps individuals can take to address the climate crisis, and reinforced our congregation's ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship and collective responsibility.*

*We hosted Scholar in Residence Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin for an environmental shabbaton, including vegan meals along with participatory Friday night, Saturday morning and Saturday evening services that included environmental education, activities and reflections around each service and discussions around caring for the planet and reducing waste led by Rabbi Cardin afterwards. The weekend culminated with an environment fair on the Sunday with more than 40 organizations and speakers providing educational information, more vegan melas, give aways, and family oriented learning activities at booths for more than 200+ participants. Our congregation was recognized by Adamah with an Environmental Leadership Award for this work.*

*In 2026 we will launch a quarterly environment newsletter, plant trees, host a movie night and sponsor Tu b'shvat.*

# Advocacy

## What steps have you taken and/or are you going to take to engage in climate advocacy or direct action?

We nominated/recruited one or more other organizations to join the Coalition.	<i>Not currently planning</i>
We partnered with others to bring climate advocacy opportunities to our community, e.g. Jewish Youth Climate Movement, Adamah on Campus, Dayenu Circle, or Jewish Earth Alliance.	<i>Continuous</i>
We participated in climate change-related demonstrations, e.g., rallies, marches, climate strikes, direct actions.	<i>In process</i>
We engaged climate-concerned voters, e.g., through postcard campaigns, hosting candidate forums, participating in “Get Out the Vote” work.	<i>Continuous</i>
We published op-eds, letters to the editor, or other articles on climate change.	<i>Want to learn more</i>
We lobbied elected officials and/or regulatory agencies on climate policy.	<i>Continuous</i>
We communicated with our community about climate advocacy opportunities.	<i>Continuous</i>

**Additional Information:** *We continually share opportunities with our congregants about upcoming legislation and advocacy projects. Encouraging congregants to sign petitions, email their representatives, and participate in advocacy forums are some of our strategies. We partner with organizations such as the BESN, the Sierra Club, and JUFJ.*

# Finance

## What steps have you taken and/or are you going to take to shift your institutional dollars from fossil fuel to climate-smart banking and investments?

We created an organizational process of learning and dialogue about socially responsible investing and climate-smart banking.	<i>Continuous</i>
We moved our banking to an institution that aligns with our values around climate action.	<i>In process</i>
<b>Do you have investments or endowments? (If yes, answer the following two questions.)</b>	<b>Yes</b>
We moved our investments out of fossil fuels.	<i>Completed</i>
We moved our investments to climate-smart funds.	<i>In process</i>
<b>Do you offer a 401k/retirement plan? (if yes, answer the two questions below)</b>	<b>No</b>
We had a climate-smart investing fund available in our 401k/retirement plan.	
We set a climate-smart investing fund as the default for our 401k/retirement plan.	
We funded other Jewish organizations to invest in GHG emissions reductions and cost-saving climate action, through grants, loans, or financing.	<i>Not currently planning</i>

**Additional Information:** *In 2024, the Social Action Committee (SAC) asked the Finance and Fundraising Committee (F&F) to evaluate investment options aligned with Chevrei Tzedek’s Climate Action Plan (CAP). In response, an ad hoc Investments Subcommittee reviewed 171 mutual funds identified by the US Sustainable Investment Forum (US SIF). The subcommittee screened and evaluated these funds using sustainability ratings and analyses from Ethos and Morningstar, ranking them based on portfolio composition, historical performance, expense ratios, and sustainability criteria.*

*Following this review, the subcommittee recommended replacing the congregation’s existing mutual funds with two alternatives: the Calvert US Large-Cap Growth Responsible Index Fund I (CGJIX) and the Praxis Growth Index Fund A (MGNDX). Both funds receive strong ratings from Morningstar and Ethos, demonstrate solid long-term performance, maintain relatively low expense ratios, and prioritize investments in clean and environmentally responsible companies. In addition, CGJIX avoids or limits exposure to companies that violate international norms, including the UN Global Compact and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.*

*In February 2025, Chevrei Tzedek’s Board (the Coordinating Committee) formally adopted a resolution to invest in mutual funds consistent with the CAP. The treasurers subsequently began a phased transition, gradually divesting from existing holdings and*

*investing in the recommended funds.*

*As part of this effort, the Investments Subcommittee also hosted a community webinar, “Investing in Our Future: Jewish Values, Financial Choices, and Climate Action,” featuring Jewish investment professionals. Co-sponsored by Adamah and the Baltimore Environmental Sustainability Network (BESN), the program took place on December 14, 2025. A recording of the event is available here: <https://youtu.be/8YIPTcVXqME>.*

# Optional Questions to Support Electrification

*Adamah is working with a leading electrification nonprofit that is focused on electrifying our homes, businesses, and communities. They develop accessible, actionable data and tools to make going electric easier, with a mission to help us save money, tackle climate goals, improve health, and build the next generation of the clean energy workforce. They are working to understand the broader emissions-mitigation and cost-saving potential of electrification. Our partnership will bring insight into the nonprofit sectors of America and, we believe, invaluable opportunities for our community.*

*You are not required to answer the following questions; however, if you are able to provide us with this information, it will help us better understand our Jewish communal landscape, which will help inform our collaborative work with this nonprofit and ultimately provide greater resources to Coalition members. The information requested below will be available on energy bills. Once you have these on hand, we ask that you save these documents for potential future engagement. If you are not able to provide this information at this time, there will be future opportunities to share your data.*

**Please share below the total money you spent and total energy consumed over the past 12 months of each of the energy types below.**

Utility	Dollars Spent	Amount Consumed
Electricity		
Methane/natural gas (from a utility)		
Heating Oil Delivered		
Propane Delivered		
Other -		

**Would you consider surveying your community about household energy use to support this project, if provided with the resources?**

Yes

# Strategic Planning and Governance

**Incorporating climate action into the everyday systems that guide your organization can ensure that climate considerations outlive any one action, policy, administrator. It can be woven into strategic planning, governance documents, and capital campaigns.**

Do you have a position on your Board for a “Sustainability Officer” or a similar title?	No
Do you maintain a building maintenance fund for repairs, on-going maintenance, and equipment replacement?	No
Did your board review your climate action plan?	Yes
Do your by-laws include climate action as a value to be considered while making decisions?	No
Is there a group who works on climate action or environmental issues generally?	Yes

**Additional Information:** Our CAP Advisory group has continued to meet and advise ways to implement our CAP. This group has helped work on the Investment webinar of Dec. 14th, as well as launching our new quarterly newsletter, updating our website, keeping our committee and community informed about pertinent legislation, and implementing our new Green Kiddush policy. Our Coordinating Committee and Rabbi continue to support our climate work.

## Climate Justice

**Those in our society with less power and fewer resources, already more vulnerable, are hit hardest by the impact of climate change. Climate action planning is an opportunity to address such harms and inequities through the pursuit of a just transition to a fossil fuel-free future, and ensure they are not recreated in the future. Like everything else in your climate action plan, incorporating climate justice is a process of learning and growth that develops year-over-year. Please use this space to share the principles, processes, and practices that your organization uses, or will use, to promote just outcomes through climate action. (Learn more about a just transition at [What is 'climate justice'? » Yale Climate Connections.](#))**

This is where advocacy is really important. We have, and will continue, to share information about climate injustice in our area, as well as actions that can be taken, such as joining protests, contacting legislators, and more

## Conferences and Retreats

**Gatherings are high-profile opportunities to reduce your climate impact and inspire your community by modeling climate action.**

<i>Does your organization run conferences or retreats? (If yes or planning to next year, please answer the seven questions below.)</i>	No
We hired an event planner with expertise in sustainable events.	
We considered climate impact while selecting a venue and/or caterer.	
We provided low-impact local transportation.	
We applied best practices to reduce the impact of food service and food waste.	
We purchased vetted carbon offsets to account for the direct impacts of the event itself and participants' travel.	
We offered opportunities for participants to offset the climate impact of their participation in the event.	

**Additional Information:**

# Resiliency

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) it is an established fact that the climate crisis has led to an increased frequency and/or intensity of some weather and climate extremes. From power outages to increased storm intensity to sea level rise to drought, scientists are connecting our experiences of natural disasters to climate change. Please include ways your organization has prepared, or will be preparing, to be resilient in the face of our changing climate. Please also specify climate disasters your organization and/or community has navigated.

To minimize disruption to your organization's operation during a crisis event, staff need to know their families are taken care of. Have you encouraged your staff to prepare family crisis plans, like the ones provided by FEMA? *No*

Is it part of a staff person's role to coordinate your staff in the event of a crisis? *No*

Have you created an organizational conversation about how to respond in the event one of your physical locations is compromised unexpectedly in a crisis? *Planning to Next Year*

What climate-related disasters has your community experienced in the past year?

*Cold/Freezing:*

Impact on your organization or community

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## Additional Information:

# Sustainability

There may be other important environmental sustainability actions you are taking that don't fit into the Coalition climate action planning framework above. Please use the space below to note other environmentally positive measures that you have undertaken, or plan to take, such as reducing single-use plastics, recycling, or litter clean-ups.

We participated in reverse Tashlich, partnering with Repair the Sea and Chizuk Amuno Congregation. We adapted the Green Kiddush policy and continue to work on best implementation. We established and will continue our new format for the Yizkor book, and have greatly reduced paper copies of announcements and programs and choosing to share those digitally. We have researched compost companies, secured funding to begin the program, and are awaiting conclusion of construction at the Myerberg so that we can proceed with a composting program.

# Program Feedback

## Rating 1-5

Community of Practice Quarterly Meetings	4	Direct Staff Engagement (phone, email, etc.)	5
One-on-one Coaching and Consultation	5	Accountability from being part of the Jewish Climate Leadership Coalition	3
Climate Action Fund	0	Monthly Coalition Newsletter	5
Resource Guides	5	Being part of the larger Jewish climate movement	5
Climate Action Overview (our framework for climate action)	4	Working with an Adamah Community Impact Hub, e.g. NY, Atlanta, Detroit, Baltimore, San Francisco, and Los Angeles	2
Online Seminars and Workshops	5	Being part of the local Jewish climate movement.	4
Climate Action Plan Submission Form	4		

## Optional Text Response

### What else, if anything, would be useful to help you create and/or implement a climate action plan?

More financial resources for renters. A protocol for quarterly or semi annual check ins would provide greater accountability, and would also ensure that appropriate resources and support are being offered to best implement the CAP. We would love to know if there is anyway to make this form more user friendly so that many people can work on it at the same time, from our group.

**If you're happy, please let us know. Your written testimonial will help us tell our story, reach out to others, and grow the program.**

We really appreciate the numerous resources that Adamah makes available and the constant support and encouragment from Sam Sobel!