



CLIMATE ACTION NEWSLETTER

SHOMREI HA'ADAMAH

Guardians of the Earth



MESSAGE FROM RABBI MARCI JACOBS

I'm honored and excited to welcome you to our new quarterly newsletter reflecting Chevrei Tzedek's commitment to climate action – Shomrei HaAdamah.

At the very beginning of the Torah, we read about the creation of humankind. God places the newly-formed human in the Garden of Eden, and gives him a charge. His role is not to passively enjoy the paradise that he saw all around him, nor is it to conquer and master it. His task is לְעִבְדָּהּ וּלְשָׁמְרָהּ / l'ovdah ul'shomrah – to work it and to protect it. (Genesis 2:15) Our world today is one where, devastatingly, so many have forgotten their role as guardians of the earth. We see the effects of this in the farthest reaches of the globe and in our daily lives. In so many ways and in so many places, we have been remiss in tending to God's world. The current reality imbues our sacred obligation with newfound urgency. The need to care for our earth is one that lives in all people everywhere. It informs our political decisions and our economic choices. It is also a profound expression of our Jewish values and our understanding of our place in the world. We are descendants of the first human, and we share the same responsibility, to be Shomrei HaAdamah, guardians of the earth.

This newsletter will share with us updates on Chevrei's Climate Action Plan, as well as ideas and opportunities to apply these values to our own lives. In this issue, look out for info and ideas for Tu BiShvat, familiarly known as the New Year of the Trees, which is almost upon us.

With blessings for a sustainable future,
Rabbi Jacobs





CHEVREI TZEDEK'S CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

[UPDATES FROM FIVE FOCUS AREAS](#)
[\(CLICK HERE TO READ THE 2026 PLAN\)](#)

➤➤➤ FACILITIES AND CLEAN ENERGY

The Facilities and Clean Energy Subcommittee continues to pursue ways to green our shared building and grounds in partnership with the Myerberg Center. While we do not control building decisions, we supported the Myerberg in applying for an Adamah grant for a new energy-efficient refrigerator and are working together to identify additional clean energy funding opportunities. We encourage carpooling and the use of public transportation for off-site events whenever possible. A top priority for the coming months is launching an on-site composting program. We have identified composting partners and are ready to move forward once construction at the Myerberg is complete.

➤➤➤ FINANCE

The Finance Subcommittee led a comprehensive review of more than 170 sustainable mutual funds and approved a transition from current investment vehicles to two values-aligned funds that reflect a commitment to climate responsibility, and financial stewardship for our congregation's reserves. These changes were approved by the Coordinating Committee and help align our investments with our Jewish values to care for the planet.

In December 2025, the Finance Subcommittee organized a webinar, *"Investing in Our Future: Jewish Values, Financial Choices, and Climate Action,"* featuring Jewish investment experts and co-sponsored by Adamah and the Baltimore Environmental Sustainability Network (BESN). If you missed it—or would like to revisit it—you can watch the recording [here](#).

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>>> FOOD AND FOOD WASTE

Chevrei Tzedek has made significant progress in making our food practices more environmentally responsible. We have eliminated petroleum-based disposable utensils and plastic tablecloths in favor of reusable and sustainable alternatives, reduced reliance on single-use plastics—especially bottles—and strengthened recycling practices after kiddush. To cut down on food waste, we encourage thoughtful packaging choices, reuse of containers for leftovers, and taking perishable foods home. We also promote plant-based kiddush options and have supported these efforts through education programs such as the Green Mitzvathon. These collective actions, led by and supported by our congregants, have helped make our community a greener place.

DID YOU KNOW?

- **Strategically planted trees and shrubs can lower energy bills by up to 25 percent by cooling homes in summer—sometimes by as much as 20 degrees—and serving as windbreaks in winter.**
- **Being around trees reduces stress, supports social well-being, and—through natural phytoncides—can lower blood pressure, ease anxiety, and promote greater kindness toward others.**

>>> ADVOCACY

The Advocacy subcommittee brings state and national environmental legislation to the attention of the Chevrei Tzedek community. To advance our advocacy efforts, we are working closely with organizations such as the Sierra Club and Interfaith Power and Lighting (IPL); and we are members of the following networks: the Baltimore Environmental Sustainability Network (BESN) and Interfaith Partnership for the Chesapeake have provided us with resources and strategies.

One of our top priorities in the next legislative session (opening January 14, 2026) will be the Maryland Bottle Bill, a Zero Waste program, which [“would reduce beverage container litter and plastic pollution by establishing a beverage container deposit-return system”](#). This bill has failed to pass in recent years, but there are high hopes that it will do better this year. To help track the progress of the Bottle Bill through the Maryland General Assembly and support its passage, contact Sally Grobani - sallygrobani@gmail.com.

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>>> EDUCATION

**TU B'SHVAT SEDER
FEBRUARY 7, 2025**



Tu B'Shvat Higiah: The New Year of the Trees is Coming!

In the middle of the month of Shvat, we celebrate the new year of the trees. While we in Baltimore hope the groundhog will tell us that winter will end soon, warmer climates in Israel are starting to see the first buds of spring. Chevrei Tzedek will celebrate with a Tu B'Shvat seder on Saturday, February 7th after services. Like the Passover seder, this celebration involves 4 cups of wine (grape juice); for Tu B'shvat we also have fruits, nuts, and thinking about the environment. We'll celebrate with thoughtful questions, stories, and of course singing. We'll finish up with actions that we can take in our own homes to help the environment.

We hope you'll join us!

