

Shir tikvah Devar Torah on FGW, WWP & peace September 23, 2016

Shabbat Shalom.

Here is the picture of my family – my daughters who grow up in Shir tikvah, their Israeli husbands and 18 of my 21, soon to be 22, grandchildren.

It's personal. This is why I work for peace between Israel and Palestine.

So through a series of relationships and chance encounters, I co-founded with a former deputy mayor of Ranana, and former chair of the Israel Women's Network, Rina Bar Tal and a University of Jordan Professor of Women's Studies and founder of the Jordanian Women's Commission, Rula Quawas, an NGO called Forward Global Women. This partnership is remarkable in itself, as Israeli and Jordanian women don't have opportunities to talk to each other. Forward Global Women trains women in peace building skills and builds relationships between women in the MENA countries – middle east/north Africa. Women leaders from academia, civil society and government from Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and the US. We cross borders for peace.

We've had several convenings in Minnesota. Members of Shir tikvah have provided home hospitality, meals, transportation, financial contributions and

attended our public events. We've also met in Berlin and last summer in Nicosia, Cyprus – both have been or still are divided cities.

Now we've taken a big step forward in our collaboration with a women focused, only two year old peace group in Israel, called Women Wage Peace. At our Mpls convening in 2015, our Palestinian team leader, Dr. Lily Feidy, suggested that we organize a massive march of Israeli and Palestinian women. Little did we know that WWP also was thinking along those lines. WWP believes that if you reawaken hope among diverse populations of women, that will create a cultural shift that will make a return to negotiations possible. WE at Shir Tikvah talk about "radical hospitality." They breathe the ruach of "Radical Hope." And now the original March of Hope, Tz'adat Tikvah, has grown into two weeks of peace related activities throughout Israel culminating in two marches on Oct 19th – one to the Dead Sea, a place of healing and the womb of the earth, the lowest surface on Earth, to meet there with Palestinian women-- and in the afternoon of Oct 19th a March to the Knesset, demanding that Israeli leaders work courageously towards a solution to the ongoing conflict, reaching an agreement that is respectful, non-violent and acceptable to both sides. Leah Gbowee, 2011 Nobel Peace Prize winner from Liberia will join the March and closing ceremony.

I invite you to visit the websites of WWP and FGW to view the inspiring video on important marches through history. Information flyers are in the Oneg hall.

We are a synagogue of hopeful people, aptly named Shir Tikvah, Song of Hope.

What can we do to help end a 50 year occupation and move the peace process forward?

WWP peace activities have been going on in Israel for the past two years and who had even heard about them? So our task is to spread the word. Women and men in our network are organizing solidarity events and activities to support the March of Hope. Here at Shir Tikvah, Oct 19th is a Hebrew School Day. The students will pose with a peace banner in front of the Sukkah for a photo to be posted on Facebook and tweeted in solidarity with the March. FGW members in our MENA countries are organizing events and discussions on women's role in peacemaking and participating in social media. The hashtag is #MarchofHope2016. I hope that you will take a few moments to follow their activities between Oct 4 and Oct 19th. Share posts and retweet! I know I can count on Rabbi Latz to do that with appropriate rabbinic commentary.

I have hope. A lasting peace between Israel and Palestine is still possible. And a secure future for my grandchildren and the children and grandchildren of our Palestinian sisters and brothers.

Shabbat Shalom. Salam alechem.