

Jerusalem, Israel.

On November 8, 2010, Rabbi Sue Mauer Morningstar joined a hundred women and a handful of men from around the world for a monthly worship service at the Kotel, the Western Wall in Jerusalem, one of the



holiest sites of the Jewish people. In October, 2010, Morningstar, a paraplegic rabbi and nurse from Ashland, Oregon, co-founded a new social justice movement with 27 rabbinic colleagues from across North America and Israel to confront religious discrimination against women at the Kotel.

During its first month, **Rabbis for Women of the Wall** garnered the support of over 450 additional rabbis and 700 ordinary Jewish men and women from five movements around the world to support Women of the Wall, a 21 year-old Jerusalem based women's prayer group. The November 8th service commemorated the one-year anniversary of the arrest of Nofrat Frenkel for wearing a tallit (prayer shawl) at the Kotel. Based upon an Israeli Supreme Court ruling, Frenkel, a medical student, could have spent up to six months behind bars for the offense that has been commuted and recently expunged from her record.

In July 2010, Jerusalem police arrested Anat Hoffman, Director of the Jerusalem based Women of the Wall for carrying a Torah during monthly worship at the Kotel. The Israeli government is deliberating whether to pursue police recommended charges against Hoffman that carry a three-year sentence.

After facing numerous challenges, including repeated mechanical

failures of her rented handicap equipped van that refused to start on the morning of November 8th, Morningstar finally rolled up for the service at the Kotel. Hoffman greeted her with a pun on “ofanim” which means both wheels and high angels in Hebrew.



“You traveled on angels to be with us,” Hoffman told Rabbi Morningstar. “This is a major event for me in my life!,” said Rabbi Morningstar. “I feel so blessed and honored share it with you.”

Rabbi Morningstar is one of seven members of OHALAH, including its President Rabbi Yocheved Mintz, who helped to launch Rabbis for Women of the Wall. This is the first time in the history of OHALAH’s 12-year existence that its leaders are formally joined with leaders of the Modern Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist movements in an international social justice effort. “Our time has come,” says Rabbi Pamela Frydman, an OHALAH Past President and International Co-Chair of Rabbis for Women of the Wall. “But this is not about us. It’s about women’s rights and human rights at one of Israel’s holiest site for the Jewish people.”

Jewish women and men everywhere are invited to sign the Rabbis for Women of the Wall statement at <http://womenofthewall.org.il/>. When signed, the statement is automatically sent to Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, Speaker of the Israeli Knesset Rubi Rivlin, Opposition Leader and Head of the Israeli Kadima Party Tzipi Livni, Chairman of the Executive of the Jewish Agency Natan Sharansky, Rabbi of the Western Wall and Holy Sites Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz, Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat and Jerusalem Chief of Police Major General Aaron Franko.

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