



Temple Beth Sholom Strategic Plan Update May 2017

In 2016, our Temple Board adopted a Strategic Plan, the purpose of which was to establish a roadmap for our progress in the critical areas of Temple activity during the ensuing five years. Utilizing the feedback we received from our congregants at meetings and from a congregational survey, we established four broad areas of activity that formed the pillars of our Strategic Plan . These specific areas are:

Education

Spirituality

Social Justice

Congregational Engagement

The Plan establishes specific goals for each of these and a task force was established for each to assure that we are meeting those goals. Karen Rivo, our Temple President has asked me to monitor our progress and report periodically to our Board

We are about to complete the first year under the Plan and so we thought it appropriate that we share with our congregants, what has been accomplished. So, following are synopses of our activities in each of those four specific Plan areas, as recently reported to our Temple Board.

Sincerely,
Allan Pekor, Chair



Congregational Engagement

Goal 1: Create and Sustain a formalized new program for New Members

Through work with our Committee, new members are welcomed throughout the year with holiday bags, new member brunch and an Open House at Rabbi Glickstein's home. The program is constantly being evaluated in an effort to make our new members feel most comfortable and welcomed at TBS. We are initiating a new member orientation outreach program to connect with members/families once they join. We also would like to adjust the new member form to allow for the new members to self-identify areas of interest. This process was started and never completed prior to the past Executive Director's departure.

Goal 2: Reduce drop-off of members at 2 key transition points: Post *B'nai Mitzvah* and Evolving Nesters

We have identified a lay leader to chair the post BM transition subcommittee. A concerted effort will be made throughout the summer of 2017 to meet with each post BM family and share the many opportunities with them. The idea is to gauge where each teen and family is in regards to status of Mitzvah projects and chances for future participation at Temple Beth Shalom.

Evolving Nesters have had a number of successful social programs and outings including *Selichot*, *Purim*, *Tango*, *Shabbat* pot-luck dinners, and events at recent Broadway Shows. These events have been consistently well attended and there are plans underway to expand the leadership of Evolving Nesters to build on the success.

Goal 3: Evaluate Existing Programs in an effort to strengthen where possible and explore continuing intersections of each with Congregational Engagement

This goal was changed once we realized that a central listing of all programs does not exist. We are in the process of building the program calendar going forward. We are creating a definable repeatable process including a time line to assist in delivering a more efficient execution of future events. This timeline will also include a post-event evaluation.



Education Committee

Goal 1: To incorporate an educational component across all programming, which includes all classes, meetings, committees and social events at TBS

We have certainly been successful in incorporating educational components across the educational programs of TBS. Most meetings of TBS programming incorporate a Dvar Torah and we hope to be more vigorous in this process as Barb Shimansky takes over the helm at SLJ. We are currently already working to have better synergy in education and educational methodology between the Elementary School, SLJ and Bnei Mitzvah as well as Youth programming.

Goal 2: To incorporate educational programming assessment for the purpose of growth and development

Once again we will be working with a new SLJ Head of School and again transitioning into a different method of assessment depending on Barb's methodology. Foundation School assessments remain effective and with the use of the ALT school technology platform we will have at our disposal assessment tools that are both easy to use by the teachers as well as easy to access by parents and students. It would be wonderful to ultimately integrate the assessment tools that will be utilized by the Elementary School into the SLJ assessments as well. Feedback from Youth programming is more amorphous and not tied to the achievement of specific learned skills or milestones.

Goal 3: To drive congregants of all ages toward opportunities to deepen their Jewish knowledge

After the preparation of the original Strategic Plan, it was agreed that Adult Education would no longer be the purview of this committee. The Education Committee is specifically NOT responsible for Adult Education and therefore we cannot speak to the educational opportunities offered to the Adult population of the Temple.

Goal 4: To continue exploring the possibility of a TBS Elementary School

TBS has opened an Elementary School and 1st grade will begin in August 2017. The current Kindergarten class will be absorbed into the Elementary School. We have partnered with ALT schools to use their technology platform to provide our TBS curriculum to our students. We will open a 2nd grade in August of 2018 and continue opening one grade per year until we have opened a 5th grade class.



TBS Social Justice

Goal 1: Create a robust social justice program at TBS with Direct Service, Education and Awareness, Advocacy and Action

Through our ongoing service projects, Justice Jams, SJN committee, mitzvah day, ASK night, town hall meeting, etc. this goal has been accomplished. We have partnered with MDC Live Arts for a performance about gun violence. We have greatly increased advocacy on gun violence prevention as seen in our mayoral meetings, letter and calling campaigns to local and state legislators.

Goal 2: Identify and integrate all age groups into the congregation's Social Justice initiatives

We have incorporated all age groups into the SJN provided all age groups with education, direct service and advocacy opportunities. We continue to provide opportunities for Foundation school, Beshty, religious school. Several new service projects were begun this year including student mentoring, election watch, etc. Teens participated in PACT rally and Justice Jam this year. An area to continue improving upon is more involvement by our teens.

Goal 3: Identify and strengthen community relationships (partnerships and coalitions)

Our progress on this goal is evident in our partnerships this year with gun violence prevention groups (Moms, Guitars Over Guns), community arts (MDC), PACT (doubling our numbers of participants since last year), and ongoing partnerships with community organizations for Mitzvah Day.

Goal 4: Actively engage with RAC to help support our goals

We have 10 people attending the RAC Consultation on Conscience this year (a 500% increase from last year), evidencing an increased engagement with the RAC. Additionally, we have been educating the congregation on the RAC's Urgency of Now campaign and have incorporated this into our Justice Jams and upcoming Town Hall meeting. BESHTY had a large group attend this year's RAC L'Taken conference in Washington, DC.

Goal 5: Develop a process for ongoing assessment of our goals

We continue to monitor participation and meaningfulness of our programming through discussion, surveys and numbers of attendance. We are now in the process of engaging the SJN members and congregants on what issue/s to focus on for the upcoming year.



COUNCIL TO ENHANCE SPIRITUALITY

Goal: Enhance the opportunities for spiritual growth and engagement at TBS in a variety of ways that are relevant throughout our diverse membership –

Objective: Establish a new Council to Enhance Spirituality

Our Council was initially formed in the summer of 2016. Our 22 members include representatives of nearly all of the working groups and committees in the Congregation plus some at-large members, meeting our diversity goal. After a series of organizational meetings over the summer, we held 5 Council meetings from October through April, 2017. Although this was more than our quarterly meetings plan, this schedule helped us to establish our group identity, a common language, define our mission, and get momentum. However, the attendance at our meetings was uneven – generally 10-14. We may look to increase our membership to assure critical mass in our dialogue. We did not open our meetings up to the congregation - we need to do that at our next meeting in September/October.

Goal: To infuse all of TBS' activities with soulfulness by focusing on the variety of journeys spirituality implies to increase one's awareness of the purpose and meaning of life- Objective: Understand and serve three journeys: inward (meditation/prayer/theology), outward (life cycle/services/study), and outside world (tikkun olam/nature)

We created an inventory of spirituality enhancing practices at Beth Sholom and created a list of suggested new ideas. At each meeting, we do some lay-led learning about spirituality to help guide our work (Jewish Lights Spirituality Handbook). We made significant strides in creating and initiating programs/ideas cultivated to touch many different activities and members of our congregation as follows (note that feedback loops have been informal – we will reach out more broadly as our programs mature):

1. **Congregational Niggun** (Into the West) – our goal is to begin each and every gathering with the niggun in order to (a) create a separation of our holy work at Beth Sholom from our outside lives/routines; and (b) mindfully enhance the group dynamic of those present. It sometimes helps to articulate that intention. Singing has not been part of the meeting culture at Beth Sholom - this is a big shift for us. Launched in January, we have made substantial strides.

2. **Wise Aging Program** – for congregants ages 60 and up, our goal is to help participants think and talk in a safe, structured group setting about the next chapter in their lives through a Jewish mindful lens. Four congregants trained in January at the Institute for Jewish Spirituality (IJS): Sandra Breiterman, Larry Hurwitz, Miriam Steinberg and Raquel Bild-Libbin. First pilot lay-led program of 4 weeks will begin ASAP for two groups of about 10-12 people each. We may need to delay to September. (Note: IJS says that these small groups often stay together for years.)



3. **Shabbatone Spirituality Enhancement Speaker Program** – our goal is to have 2 guests per year join us for a Shabbat to help us in our journey to enhance our spirituality – both congregational and small group meetings would be scheduled during the weekend. We will plan these through (a) the Singerman Legacy gift; and (b) a program designed by the Council for which we have budget authority. First speaker is on Dec 1-2: Rabbi Sheila Weinberg.

4. **Foundation School “God Talk” Program** – our goals are to (a) explore how we think about and talk about God with our kids and grandkids (and each other); and (b) explore ways to integrate the Foundation School with our congregation to create mutually uplifting experiences. This pilot program will begin with (i) parents of kindergarten kids and (ii) grandparents. In April, Margie Zeskind created a video of kindergarten kids in the Foundation School. Rabbi Glickstein and Margie Zeskind will have moderated all of the discussion groups. Grandparents met on April 25 – all were very enthusiastic about the discussion and follow-up. Parents will meet in May.

5. **613 Mitzvoth Discussion Group** - this lay led initiative has been meeting successfully each Tuesday morning at 8:00 am with about 6-12 participants.

6. **Avodat Halev** - meditation and discussion group on Saturday mornings at 8:25 am - this lay led initiative has been meeting successfully with about 6-10 participants.

7. **Exploratory discussion of new ideas:** (a) enhancing our prayer experience, including prayer study and praying without prayer books (chanting and meditation); (b) IJS program this summer for enhancing congregational culture with programming for middot and mindfulness; (c) ideas for enhancing Shabbat morning experience with integration of our kids at Minyan service as well as ideas for attracting more adults.