

Temple Shalom of Newton Shalom Commitment Giving Guidelines and FAQs

We are excited to embark on this journey with you all. To truly change the way we connect with others and build our community, we must have our system of financial engagement derive from our model of spiritual and relational engagement. We believe that *Shalom Commitment* is in keeping with our goal to maintain Temple Shalom as a place for meaningful relationships, a strong community, and life-long engagement in an open, welcoming space.

Why are we changing our dues system?

Like many temples, Temple Shalom has explored different funding models that will be both financially sustainable and consistent with our values. Research shows that current generations of Jewish adults are uncomfortable with what they perceive as synagogues' "pay to pray" dues models. Indeed, the traditional model of fixed dues is out of step with contemporary Jewish values and culture. It's no surprise, then, that synagogue affiliation overall has been declining for years. If the value of a synagogue is merely the sum of the value of the services it offers, people can find similar services elsewhere for less or even on a piecemeal basis. Just as Temple Shalom regularly evaluates and updates our programs and services to meet the evolving needs of our community, we must also ensure that our financial model reflects our values as well as current trends in Judaism.

After considering a variety of models, speaking with Temples who have adopted new approaches, and reviewing our own Temple's finances and culture, the Board unanimously voted to move towards a new model that better reflects and supports Temple Shalom's commitment to being an inclusive and welcoming community to all. **Our new model**, *Shalom Commitment*, encourages potential members to join our community and allows existing members to remain even when family structures, financial realities, or life circumstances change. Importantly, *Shalom Commitment* reflects our belief that we are a community where belonging is a personal and shared responsibility.

How do the Temple's finances work?

The Temple categorizes its expenses as follows: Holiday & Worship; K-12, B'nei Mitzvah & Engagement; Early Childhood; Adult Learning, Programming & Pastoral; Administration; and Facilities & Grounds. The Temple's sources of funding include Membership Contributions; Children & Youth Education (K-8 and Nursery School tuition); Donations; and Facility Rental. Like many congregations, most years our expenses exceed the revenue we bring in from dues and other fees, so we must pull out funds from our endowment (funds invested for the Temple's future) to pay for annual operations.

How will Shalom Commitment work?

Shalom Commitment replaces our existing dues model and allows members to make an annual contribution in an amount that is financially comfortable for them. Under the new model, each year the Temple will review the projected budget and revenue for the coming year to create Giving Guidelines. These guidelines are structured to encourage giving at the highest level possible, while maintaining flexibility for those who may not be able to give as generously. Each member will be asked to make an annual pledge in an amount that is meaningful for them. As always, members can pay their commitment in full, or via a payment plan of their choosing.

Our goals are to provide the same high level of services and programming our congregation currently enjoys, expand our membership base, and to reduce the need to pull funds from our endowment on an annual basis.

How much should I give? Is there a minimum?

Since our founding, members have always given at a range of levels. To help determine your level of giving, the temple has created guidelines for commitment levels below. Although there is no required minimum giving level, all members are expected to contribute some amount; the Giving Guidelines include a suggested minimum of \$1,800. **Regardless of the amount you give, your membership is the same.** This new model also eliminates the need for an abatement process.

RECOMMENDED SHALOM COMMITMENT LEVELS:

\$5,400+	This amount covers our Temple’s operating expenses and provides additional support for the community and for households unable to contribute the suggested minimum amount.
\$4,050	The amount that, if contributed by the majority of households, would cover all of our Temple’s operating expenses without additional funding from the endowment.
\$3,600	The amount that, if contributed by the majority of households, would cover our Temple’s operating expenses along with funds from our endowment.
\$1,800	Suggested minimum giving. Your support, at any level, is appreciated as your level of giving is not used to determine membership.

These suggested levels are calculated using the preliminary 2022-2023 budget and membership numbers and are rounded to a multiple of chai.

Why should I continue to give at or above my current annual contribution?

One of the factors that makes this model possible is having community members give generously. Doing so enables members who do not have the financial resources to maintain their membership and engagement in our community. Additionally, your generous *Shalom Commitment* will limit our need to take funds out of the endowment. This is consistent with our mission of creating an inclusive and welcoming community and as an important investment in the future of Judaism.

What Temple services are included with my Shalom Commitment?

Your contribution covers all Temple services available to the entire congregation, including Security Fees, Book of Memory, and High Holiday Guest Tickets. Other programming that is only available to or utilized by a segment of the community, such as the Nursery School, K-8 Program, Facility Rentals, and B’nei Mitzvah will still be charged separately.

The Temple will continue to accept additional contributions in support of a variety of initiatives and events, such as the Community Freedge, Afghan Resettlement Project, Tree of Life, Yahrzeit, and the Passport to Israel Fund.