



CONGREGATION  
**SHEARITH ISRAEL**  
YOUR INTOWN SYNAGOGUE

**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**2020**

## **MISSION**

Congregation Shearith Israel connects people to meaningful living through Judaism.

## **VISION**

Our congregation is rooted in Conservative Judaism and committed to egalitarianism. Relationships are at the center of everything we do: we educate children and adults in Jewish values, Hebrew language and the continuing story of our people; we elevate our spirits and feel God's presence through prayer experiences; we embrace our covenantal responsibility to comfort all who are suffering, and celebrate each other's joy.

# FIVE PILLARS / TASK FORCES

## ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

Michael Axelrod \*  
Cheryl Finkel \*  
Robin Rosenberg \*  
Tony Kenneson Adams  
Tina Arbes  
Helaine Brill  
Natalie Kirsh  
Brenda Leder  
Brian Rosenzweig  
Jerry Rothenberg  
Blair Rothstein  
Howie Slomka

## GEMILUT HASADIM (Acts of Loving Kindness)

Martha Berlin \*  
Elise Eplan \*  
Ronit Walker \*  
Susan Baker  
Robin Deutsch Edwards  
Alex Drohobyczer  
Arlene Koslow  
Hallie Ludson  
Michele Marill  
Denise McLaughlin  
Nina Rubin  
Susan Shewmaker  
Jennifer Wampler

## AVODAH (Prayer)

Jon Effron \*  
Navit Robkin \*  
Ghila Sanders \*  
Sara Duke  
Ed Jacobson  
Elana Menkowitz  
Lindy Miller  
Samara Minkin  
Bruce Stiftel

## TORAH (Education)

Erin Chernow \*  
Barry Etra \*  
Nate Block \*  
Lisa Ellison  
Marcia Jacobs  
Rebecca Kolesky  
Sara Ossey  
Adina Rudisch  
Andrea Slomka  
Craig Stehle  
Shana Tabak  
Susan Tenenbaum  
Ken Zeff

## FACILITIES

Samara Minkin \*  
Lee Pollock \*  
Michael Rosenzweig \*  
Matt Bronfman  
Jaci Effron  
Ed Jacobson  
Susie Lazega  
Jodi Mansbach  
Micah Rosen  
Liz Rosenzweig  
Stanley Tenenbaum  
Jaime Wender  
Janice Wolf

\* Chairs

# ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

## WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

- The great work congregants do for Shearith Israel often ends when congregants change positions.
- There is a strong need to provide congregants with opportunities to participate in congregational growth.
- Congregants are sometimes unaware of programs at Shearith Israel and how to become involved.
- Congregants are looking for clear and effective communication; not more communication.
- The growth of the shul, member involvement and enthusiasm for additional programs have generated a demand for new and expanded roles for staff, beyond their existing capacity.

## OBJECTIVES

- Build Institutional continuity.
- Develop a comprehensive communication strategy for Shearith Israel.
- Centralize information related to shul offerings and sign-up / RSVP.
- Ensure staffing models (professional and administrative) and organizational structure align with current shul needs and strategic plan.

## MEASUREMENT

- New congregants and retention of existing congregants
- Community buzz
- Staff satisfaction
- Diversity in offerings from birth to old age, representing the intergenerational needs and interests of our congregation
- Engagement with programming
  - Attendance at individual programs
  - Measurable increase in overall number of congregants attending programming
- Feedback and satisfaction surveys
- Engagement with communication technology available through web site.

TACTICS	WHO / TIME FRAME
<b>1) Activate the governance committee to function year round to develop and implement a program to identify, recruit and provide training for current and future leadership of the shul.</b>	Board: Short term (next Board cycle)
<b>2) Create a board position to coordinate communication at CSI and chair the Communications Advisory Committee (to be filled with an at large member of the Board).</b>	Board: Short term (next Board cycle)
<b>3) Create a Communications Advisory Committee to determine the process for effective communication.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify any additional resources required or recommended (technology, consultants) to manage communications, and to assist with the following tasks:</li> <li>• Develop channel strategy to diversify communications across web, social media, etc.</li> <li>• Manage how synagogue news is organized and published.</li> <li>• Develop clear protocols for registering and communicating congregants' life cycle events, hospitalizations, etc (with involvement of Chesed subcommittee, see below)</li> <li>• Better target the right communications to the right congregants.</li> <li>• Identify the right tools to allow congregants to easily find the information most relevant to them.</li> </ul>	Creating board position: Board: Short term (next Board cycle)  Work of Committee: Medium term (within two years)
<b>4) Centralize all information about activities at Shearith Israel.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create catalog of all programming/volunteer opportunities available to congregants, including who to contact and logistics.</li> <li>• Clarify and centralize how to sign up to volunteer for programs and rsvp for events.</li> </ul>	Office Staff: Short term (within six months)
<b>5) Assess staff capacity and tools and identify opportunities to develop or augment staff to support the needs of the congregation.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document processes and procedures (volunteer and administrative) in order to identify areas of process improvement.</li> <li>• Develop job descriptions to support shul needs.</li> </ul>	Human Resources Committee: Medium term (within two years)
<b>6) Consider hiring a programming coordinator to lead engagement across Torah, Avodah, and Gemilut Hasadim.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid redundancy and fill in gaps in programming.</li> <li>• Assess and evaluate programming and administrative practices to ensure effective and efficient operations.</li> <li>• Create a process for congregants to follow when considering creation of a new program in order to assure a consistent process, and to confirm adequate shul capacity.</li> </ul>	Human Resources Committee: Medium term (within two years)

# ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH: DEVELOPMENT

**WHAT WE'VE LEARNED**

- Shearith Israel does not currently have a formal vision or structure for development.

**OBJECTIVES**

- Develop a fundraising action plan that energizes a culture of giving, and strengthens financial support for the strategic goals and future needs of the synagogue.

**MEASUREMENT**

- Money raised
- Money invested
- Reduced time between identifying need and allocating resources

TACTICS	WHO / TIME FRAME
<p><b>7) Create a board position, Chair of Development, to set the vision for development at CSI and advocate for that vision (to be filled by existing at large board member).</b></p>	<p>Board: Short term (next Board cycle)</p>
<p><b>8) Create a Development Advisory Committee to help develop and implement the vision.</b></p>	<p>Board: Short term (next Board cycle)</p> <p>Work of Committee: Long term (within three years)</p>

# GEMILUT HASADIM (Acts of Loving Kindness)

## WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

- Social action is a fundamental tenet of Jewish life — including those actions that make a positive impact on our environment, our community and ourselves.
- Shearith Israel is full of great people committed to meaningful social action.
- Congregants are not always aware of opportunities to do Chesed, to help other Congregants.
- We are warm and welcoming, and can build on this strength.
- For sustained growth, we need to focus on how we onboard new members, and continue the process, to make people feel at home.

## OBJECTIVES

- Continue the work being done to set the vision for social action priorities.
- Develop tools to promote and nurture congregant-led initiatives.
- Support opportunities for congregants to contribute to existing social action initiatives.
- Support meaningful connections between congregants at life cycle events and moments of greatest need.
- Become known for audacious hospitality to new visitors and existing members.
- Increase the number and diversity of visitors who can add to our community by becoming members.

## MEASUREMENT

- Volunteer engagement
  - Greater number of volunteers
  - Frequency of volunteering
- Satisfaction from members that their lifecycle needs are being addressed, and feedback from volunteers that they feel engaged in meaningful acts of loving kindness.

TACTICS	WHO / TIME FRAME
<p><b>1) Create a board position to chair the Social Action Committee (to be filled by existing at large Board member).</b></p>	<p>Board: Short term (next Board cycle)</p>
<p><b>2) Create a Social Action Committee with three subcommittees.</b></p> <p><b>Social Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the creation and management of Ahavat Chinam volunteer opportunities.</li> <li>• Create clear guide of CSI-sponsored opportunities that serve the larger community, with clear directions on how to volunteer.</li> </ul> <p><b>Chesed (Bring in Current Chesed Committee)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen core group of volunteers dedicated to engaging in the work of Chesed.</li> <li>• Develop new ways to connect to congregants for life cycle events.</li> <li>• Develop clear protocols for communicating congregants' life cycle events, hospitalizations, etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>Kavod (Inclusion and Welcoming)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish an organized group of welcomers who greet people to services, sit with visitors or new members at kiddushes.</li> <li>• Reevaluate and strengthen New Member Onboarding Process - reach out to meet new members to determine interests, invite to events, and continue to check in with new members to help them feel at home.</li> <li>• Create a process to continue new member onboarding and confirm new members are finding a place in the community.</li> <li>• Work with Facilities Committee to ensure signage provides guiding information to visitors and new members, so people know where to go.</li> </ul>	<p>Board: Short term (next Board cycle)</p>

# AVODAH (Prayer)

## WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

- Congregants connect to spirituality in many different ways.
- Every congregant has different spiritual needs at different times.
- Among congregants, there are different levels of comfort with traditional paths to spirituality and prayer.

## OBJECTIVES

- Build intentional, deep engagement in meaningful prayer through the development of multiple prayer services.
- Create new opportunities to participate in the main sanctuary service.
- Support congregants at different levels of comfort and familiarity with services.

## MEASUREMENT

- Attendance at main and alternative services
- Feedback on changes to service offering
- Depth of kavanah during services

TACTICS	WHO / TIME FRAME
<p><b>1) Create an alternative service.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire a dedicated prayer leader to lead a consistent alternative Shabbat morning service on a weekly basis.</li> <li>• Create dedicated, beautiful space appropriate for alternative services.</li> <li>• Request commitment from core group to attend service for a stated period of time.</li> </ul>	<p>Rabbi, Spiritual Music Innovator &amp; Religious Life Committee: Short term (within six months)</p>
<p><b>2) Strengthen opportunities to engage in the main sanctuary.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find teaching opportunities/moments to inspire in the main service.</li> <li>• Incorporate guiding language to educate on tefilot, as we move through the service.</li> <li>• Display page numbers during the main service.</li> <li>• Rope off seats to encourage people to sit closer together.</li> <li>• Consider new seating options.</li> </ul>	<p>Rabbi, Spiritual Music Innovator and Religious Life Committee: Medium term (within two years)</p>

# TORAH (Education)

## WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

- Education at Shearith Israel is oriented toward pre-teenage children and empty-nesters.
- Education outside of Machaneh Shai is uncoordinated thematically or logistically.

## OBJECTIVES

- Consolidate educational strategies at Shearith Israel to address the range of needs of congregants from birth to senior years.
- View education we offer as a path to inspiring congregants to lead a deeper Jewish life.
- Give people access to Jewish tools for navigating life.
- Coordinate across educational offerings to maximize logistical efficiencies and build greater engagement.

## MEASUREMENT

- Attendance at educational programming
- Attendance of net new congregants at educational programming

TACTICS	WHO / TIME FRAME
<b>1) Consolidate educational advisory into a single committee to holistically address all aspects of education at Shearith Israel, including Machaneh Shai.</b>	Current Jewish Learning Chair: Short to Medium term (within two years)
<b>2) Create a framework and toolkit for developing new educational programming.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete best practices assessment of current educational programming and support structures. (Resources from USCJ can serve as a starting point)</li> <li>• Develop a system for evaluating programming.</li> <li>• Coordinate intercommunity partnerships with other organizations in Atlanta which can provide additional educational opportunities for the congregation.</li> </ul>	Educational Advisory Committee: Medium term (within two years)
<b>3) Create or identify programming that addresses the needs of all congregants.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm our programs reflect the needs and interests of all members from early childhood through young families to senior years.</li> <li>• Assist in creation of programming to address needs of teens, particularly related to Shabbat services and holidays.</li> </ul>	Educational Advisory Committee: Short to Medium term (within two years)



# FACILITIES

## WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

- The Facilities Task Force completed a full review of the building, to include all systems and appliances located in the building.
- The Facilities Task Force prepared a list of non-discretionary repairs that has been approved by the Board.
- After completing the assessment of the health of the campus, we need to review the full scope of the needs of the congregation with regard to the main building in the short term, and the campus, as a whole, in the long term.
- There are many opportunities for collaboration and partnership within the intown Atlanta Jewish community. Our Master Planning process should include investigation into the options for partnership (with JCC, Federation, other groups), in order to imagine and possibly fund proposed future renovation of our campus.

## OBJECTIVES

- Maintain the Shul campus on an on-going, routine basis.
- Allow for short term change to the aesthetics of the building and best use of space, while simultaneously beginning a long term process to create a Master Plan for the entire shul campus.
- Create a 21st Century synagogue campus.

## MEASUREMENT

- Reduced time to set up spaces for programming
- Increased ability to accommodate different types of activities

TACTICS	WHO / TIME FRAME
<b>1) Reinvigorate the Facilities or Building Committee, to include designating a Chair.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain the facilities at CSI, manage or sub-contract out non-discretionary repairs, and address maintenance on an on going basis.</li> </ul>	Executive Committee of the Board: Short term (within six months)
<b>2) Authorize discretionary budget for an aesthetics committee to address immediate needs.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate current use of our space to capture best use of space, even while we undertake master planning process</li> <li>• Support wayfinding through signage that directs people on a daily basis to the right locations.</li> <li>• Support flow of traffic for primary activities such as Services and Machaneh Shai.</li> <li>• Ensure best possible spaces for programming like Tot Shabbat, library.</li> <li>• Support lobby enhancements to appropriately reflect our warm, welcoming, community feel.</li> </ul>	Board: Short term (within six months)
<b>3) Address commitment to environmental stewardship.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct energy audit/assessment.</li> <li>• Establish signage and instruction on recycling and composting efforts.</li> </ul>	Facilities or Building Committee, along with Green Team: Medium term (within two years)
<b>4) Create a Master planning Committee to prepare a master plan for the use of the campus.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on the foundational work completed by the Facilities Task Force.</li> <li>• Continue to address universal accessibility of the campus.</li> <li>• Identify and investigate opportunities to partner with the larger Atlanta Jewish community, as we confirm changes we want to make to our campus in the next three to five years.</li> </ul>	Facilities or Building Committee: Medium to Long term (within three years)



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