

There are many factors that make a congregation thrive and continue to find creative and innovative ways to build a community like Temple Sinai's. One of the most important factors in achieving this is to have sacred partnerships at the core of our congregational shared leadership.

Before I became President of Temple Sinai, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to attend the Scheidt Seminar for incoming temple presidents held by the Union of Reform Judaism (URJ) in Atlanta (back when we were regularly flying to and mingling person-to-person at such events). There was much that I learned at the Scheidt Seminar and the concept of sacred partnerships was one of the most important. I think of sacred partnerships both when I am engaged with Rabbi Jay in our leadership responsibilities and when I observe how our lay leadership works hand-in-hand with our staff and clergy.

The URJ defines sacred partnership as follows:

- When two people sit together and there are words of Torah between them, the Shechinah (Divine Presence) dwells among them. (Pirkei Avot 3:2)
- A sacred partnership is a commitment to building and nurturing relationships that elevate the work of leadership to a level of holiness. Sacred partnerships recognize each of us as individuals and our desire to inspire sacred action in our communities.
- Sacred partnerships are built and nurtured through the Jewish values of mutual respect, trust, honesty, listening and communication, transparency, confidentiality, flexibility, and reflection.

It is hard for me to point to one of the Jewish values listed above and say it is the most important to me in my understanding of sacred partnership. Each is important in all interpersonal relationships, not only among congregational leadership. Without "mutual respect" how do you practice "listening and communication"? How can one experience "trust" without "honesty"? Is it possible to be "transparent" without expecting that appropriate "confidentiality" would be practiced? How can one be "flexible" and not have the ability to practice "reflection"? As you can see, these values are interconnected (and can be connected) in many different ways.

I believe that sacred partnerships are one of the core values that makes the congregational shared leadership of Temple Sinai so successful. The values that reflect a sacred partnership are an integral part of my day to day working relationship with Rabbi Jay. I also know that sacred partnerships exist throughout Temple Sinai's leadership. I observe it on a daily basis among our Vice Presidents, committees and task forces and their respective staff/clergy counterparts. Most recently sacred partnerships played a vital role in the successful replacement of the boiler in our school wing. It was a complex project made possible through the sacred partnership between Sharon Goldstein, our VP of Operations, Shelly Welfeld, our Director of Operations, and Jeff Pardo.

What I think is most important is that these values are consciously reflected upon from time to time by our shared congregational leadership. For those of us in sacred partnerships it is always helpful to remember what makes them so special. For me, both experiencing and observing sacred partnerships at Temple Sinai is one of the great benefits of being a part of our sacred community.

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