

TEMPLE SINAI STRATEGIC PLAN
2020-2023

INTRODUCTION

Temple Sinai has long been engaged in planning for its future. The Temple Sinai Board of Trustees established the Strategic Planning Committee in 1995, the first major initiative of which was Project Jubilee: A Plan to Lead Temple Sinai into the 21st Century. The findings and recommendations of this project formed a “blueprint for taking us into the next century.” Since then, the Board, with the guidance of the Strategic Planning Committee, has implemented several subsequent strategic plans.

The current Strategic Plan draws significantly from these previous plans, but takes a somewhat different approach. After considering both the most recent plan and the issues and goals of greatest importance to the congregation today, the committee determined that the most effective structure for the new plan would be to express in value statements what we believe are the principles for which Temple Sinai stands and what distinguishes Temple Sinai among Jewish congregations. These values are derived from our own experiences at Temple Sinai, the stories and opinions of other members, thoughts and opinions of clergy and staff, and the opinions of the larger congregation as expressed through the 2015 congregational survey.

The value statements in this Temple Sinai Strategic Plan are intended to articulate what the Temple Sinai community believes is currently important in the life of Temple Sinai, to express the passion that we share for our community, and to set the agenda for the next three years for what we aspire to be.

The value statements are in bold at the beginning of each section. The bullets following each value statement are specific goals and objectives which are intended to implement that value statement. Some of the goals and objectives are time-sensitive and are intended to be accomplished or have significant strides made toward accomplishment during the term of this Strategic Plan. Other goals and objectives are “evergreen” and are intended to be ongoing guidance to the Temple Sinai community.

We have been deliberate about our use of the terms “members,” “community,” and “individuals and families.” “Members” are those who have made the commitment to be included on our membership list. “Community” refers both to members and to others who are connected to Temple Sinai or its activities, e.g., nursery school families or staff who are not members and relatives of members who participate in Temple activities. “Individuals and families” includes both the community and others who choose to participate in Temple Sinai services, programs, or activities.

The Strategic Plan sets an agenda to guide Temple Sinai's clergy and staff in making decisions about programmatic priorities, Temple Sinai's lay leaders in responsive governance of the congregation, and committee chairs in appropriate deployment of Temple resources. But it also sets an agenda for each of us as members of the Temple Sinai community. We urge Temple Sinai members to read this Strategic Plan and to consider how we all can implement its values, goals, and objectives in our interactions with everyone in our Temple Sinai community.

The Strategic Planning Committee

Marsha Shaines, Chair

Ellen Agler

Emily Berman

Marta Goldsmith

Herb Mintz

Kevin Mulshine

Thorn Pozen

Rabbi Jonathan Roos

Dianne Rudo

Marcie Solomon

Emily Waldman

Rosann Wisman

VALUES, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

We believe that Reform Judaism is the essence of our Temple Sinai community and a source of comfort, support, inspiration, and strength in our lives.

- Maintain a full calendar of religious services throughout the year, including a variety of options for Shabbat and the High Holy Days
- Create worship opportunities that explore and engage the broad spectrum of progressive Jewish theologies
- Celebrate life cycle events with creativity and inclusiveness
- Promote the values of the Reform Movement through programs and initiatives including those of Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ), Men of Reform Judaism (MRJ), Association of Reform Zionists of America (ARZA), the Religious Action Center (RAC), NFTY--the Reform Jewish Youth Movement, Union of Reform Judaism (URJ) camps, and our own congregational programs
- Continue to incorporate creative music as an integral part of the Temple's worship experience and celebration of Jewish life and tradition

We believe in respecting and engaging individuals and families without judgment on their own paths of Jewish experience, learning, and practice.

- Cultivate and reaffirm among staff and volunteers a commitment to this core value through explicit training and support
- Encourage open communication from members to share ideas, experiments, and new practices with our clergy and staff
- Articulate our policies of Jewish practice, to be responsive and transparent about what we can and cannot support
- Support clergy innovation as a means to engage the Temple Sinai community in a variety of ways to experience Reform Judaism

We believe in welcoming all who participate at Temple Sinai and in celebrating our inclusive and diverse community.

- Embrace inclusion of interfaith families in all aspects of temple life
- Encourage engagement of LGBTQ+ individuals and families in temple activities
- Accommodate and encourage participation of individuals who have physical or other special needs, and their families
- Affirm and enhance our identity as a multiracial and antiracist community

We believe that *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) is an essential element of Judaism and are committed to Temple Sinai continuing as a strong, audacious leader for social justice.

- Create a Center for Social Justice to organize our social action activities under a single umbrella, enhance our current social action initiatives, and expand into new areas and new programs
- Continue on-going support for Sinai House and the Sinai Assisted Housing Foundation
- Serve as an active progressive faith voice in the local and national communities and serve as a model for others to follow

- Engage our members in social justice on a local and national level
- Integrate *tikkun olam* as a component in ritual, educational, and other activities

We believe in being a caring community whose members feel a sense of belonging and support from the clergy and each other in times of celebration and need.

- Maintain and further develop Kathie Rabinovitz SinaiCares as an active and responsive center for pastoral care to our members, including renewed efforts to engage volunteers in its activities and initiatives
- Foster existing and create new opportunities for formal and informal member-to-member connections
- Ensure, especially at critical touchpoints like life cycle events, that members feel a sense of personal attention from clergy and staff
- Provide for the needs of members across the life spectrum, including simchas and maintaining our cemetery at the Garden of Remembrance

We believe in providing Jewish education that has a meaningful impact on its participants from early childhood through adult education.

- Assure the religious school and nursery school reflect exceptional standards of practice, pedagogy and operation within their respective fields
- Plan for and effectively address challenges presented by the Temple's renovation and expansion project to mitigate their impact on the school programs
- Maintain a full, diverse schedule of adult learning opportunities, including one-time stand alone events and ongoing classes and programs, where a variety of viewpoints are welcome
- Articulate the values and policies behind our nursery school and religious school programs to ensure transparency and consistency
- Maintain the library as an important resource for Jewish education, gathering, and support for programming and ritual life of the Temple Sinai community

We believe in thoughtful and transparent stewardship of Temple Sinai's resources.

- Complete the URJ Benchmarking Project for synagogue expenses and develop appropriate and realistic recommendations to ensure the control of costs and maintenance of a balanced budget
- Continue attention to Temple security and implement changes and new practices as needed
- Ensure the Temple's electronic database adequately captures relevant information to support and enhance member and community engagement across Temple programs and activities
- Maintain transparency in Temple governance by providing members with open access to the Board and significant Board decisions, consistent with our bylaws and best practices of non-profit governance
- Cultivate a steady stream of future lay leaders through activities such as the Leadership Development Program

- Ensure Temple Sinai remains environmentally friendly, taking into account the impact on the environment and our neighborhood when developing and implementing plans related to the renovation, expansion, operation, and maintenance of our building and grounds.
- Successfully complete the “Honor our Heritage, Build our Future” fundraising campaign and the renovation and expansion project, with continued planning to minimize programmatic and financial disruption
- Improve fundraising capacity and nurture the culture of philanthropy modeled by the “Honor our Heritage, Build our Future” campaign to ensure ongoing fundraising efforts have the appropriate planning, member engagement and leadership, and administrative support

We believe that Temple Sinai should be a vibrant, joyful, and spiritually and intellectually stimulating place.

- Implement practices to create a sense of “being known” by clergy, staff and other members, including an emphasis on using members’ names and fostering relationships
- Support opportunities for members to develop and enhance meaningful connections with one another
- Enhance member engagement with more proactive efforts encouraging members to participate in programs, volunteer, and join committees
- Continue to improve communications to effectively promote the Temple’s programming and opportunities
- Raise the Temple’s profile in the geographic neighborhood to attract and serve new members and guests who live nearby
-
- Maintain an outstanding staff and clergy who continue to implement these values and help ensure the character and vibrancy of Temple Sinai for the future

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This new Strategic Plan is the product of the hard, committed work of the Strategic Planning Committee over many months. Our discussions were thought-provoking and went to the heart of what Temple Sinai means to us—and usually started at 7:45AM. I am very grateful to each member of the committee for his and her steadfast dedication to this process over many months. Special thanks to Herb Mintz, Rabbi Roos, and Emily Waldman, who joined me as a drafting subcommittee, generously dedicating even more of their time and talents to help figure out how to mold the products of the committee's lively discussions into a document that will be useful to the clergy, lay leadership, and congregation in making decisions about Temple Sinai's path for the next three years. Thank you, too, to Ellen Agler, who always knew just where to find the old document that had exactly the information for which we were searching, and to Laura Rose, who always made sure our meetings were equipped with everything we needed, especially plenty of coffee for the early morning start times.

Marsha Shaines, Strategic Planning Committee Chair