

Report to Har Shalom Board from March 16 to April 20, 2021

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Iyyar by Nireh Or

Abstract

- Continuing robust program of online services and learning
- Collaboration with Holly, Bert, and Dave, David Cox for service leading.
- Initiated Pesach mailing to 2-yr mailing list
- Composed Constant Contact follow-up for matching appeal: two free-standing notices and article in two weeklies
- My calendar of Har Shalom activities and appointments is available to every board member, using your Har Shalom email address and password to gain access to the Har Shalom office suite
- Proposing personal leave Mon 6/7-7/1
- See February retreat notes at end of this report (pp 2-6)
- Visioning for the next two years and beyond

Services, Special Observances

- 4th Friday 4 All, once/month
- First Saturday Torah service, once/month
- MAOR Shabbat Across MT, April 16
- Baby naming May 23
- Memorial planning for two burials

Education, Adult and Youth

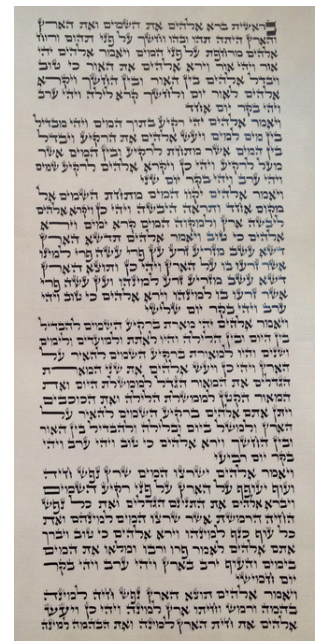
- Atidaynu, Sundays, twice/month
- Bmitz Hebrew, Tuesdays weekly
- Torah study, 3 or 4 Saturdays/month
- Special Torah study with Hebrew focus, once/month
- Beit Midrash, Mondays, weekly
- Lunch with the Rabbi, Wednesdays, weekly
- Biblical Hebrew for Beginners, Wednesdays, 20-week series
- Individual learning support, weekly

Har Shalom Administrative & Planning

- Weekly meet-up with Past-President Holly Kingsford/Google doc with notes
- Content for weekly
- Handwritten, personal notes for Yahrtzeit letters (monthly)
- **Upcoming:** special session to consider the why, how, and when of re-opening face-to-face activities
- **Upcoming:** special consideration of future of Atidaynu

Pastoral, Outreach, and Greater Community

- **Pastoral** (details confidential): Individual sessions, phone calls and emails, responses to requests for information, and other services, 5 to 10/week
- **Greater Community**
 - Rattlesnake Mutual Aid, 2x monthly
 - Missoula Interfaith Collaborative Clergy meetings
 - MHRN Board: Montana Human Rights Network, hiring committee
 - Clergy group, "Truth to Power", to lobby legislature, ongoing
 - JOIN (Jewish Organizing Institute and Network) for Justice clergy workshop, "Don't Kvetch, Organize!", 8 weeks, participant



Board Retreat Feb 2021 Notes

CONGREGATION HAR SHALOM VISION, MISSION AND GOAL STATEMENTS

VISION

We envision a cohesive, holy community united by Jewish values and traditions, a “makom”, a sacred space, to create meaningful Jewish life for current and future generations.

• Are we working towards "cohesiveness"? If so, how? If not, what actions might we consider?

Cohesiveness is the extent to which members stick together and remain united in the pursuit of a common goal. A **group** is said to be in a state of **cohesion** when its members possess bonds linking them to one another and to the **group** as a whole.

Group cohesiveness (also called **group cohesion** and **social cohesion**) arises when bonds link members of a social group to one another and to the group as a whole. Although cohesion is a multi-faceted process, it can be broken down into four main components: social relations, task relations, perceived unity, and emotions.^[1] Members of strongly cohesive groups are more inclined to participate readily and to stay with the group.^[2]

To me, it feels like the Board, with our unique individual characteristics, is united in wanting Har Shalom to flourish. Most of us are finding some form of spiritual nourishment in our community. Does anyone among us desire some other ingredient or condition to make Har Shalom feel like a "makom"?

- One positive step: we now have a fixed email communication list for Board, Rabbi, and Admin, so everyone is in the loop on communications.
- One downside: list members don't customarily acknowledge group communications or respond. What does that indicate about the state of our cohesiveness, if anything?
- Bert's recent shalach manot: gave rise to conversations and a sense of connection.
- Moshe and Chava's shalach manot (directed to people by recommended by Laurie), also plays a role in linking us.
- Thank you notes for Rabbi Fund donations, a personal touch
- Recruiting service leaders regularly.
- Thank you notes for participating in High Holidays as leaders, a personal touch
- Handwritten notes on Yahrtzeit letters, a personal touch
- Lunch with the Rabbi: a weekly, consistent group of ~12, who say they feel safe and valued to both share ideas and present topics
- Regular followings for weekly Beit Midrash (~10 to 15) and weekly Torah study (~10 to 15)

What further might we consider?

- Create a culture of board response and check in: ask ourselves as leaders to adopt habits of connecting with each other more regularly, for example, giving feedback on emails, congregational events

- sometimes I feel like no one cares that I wrote to them or did something because I don't hear back. I need feedback to function fully. I need to know if my concern about something shared by others. Is an event or activity that I either led or organized appreciated?
 - Do we need other formal or semi-formal points of contact or communication during the month between board meetings? If so, what?
- Adopting cooperative projects that are important to our leadership and members
 - is there anything about which we share enough enthusiasm that might be a good project to take up together? Not burdensome, but unifying? For example...?
- *How are we working towards holiness?*
 - Responding as quickly as possible to people's needs
 - Acting with kindness and validation toward other community members
 - Offering structured support where possible
 - offering times to pray deeply, modeling prayer
- *How are we honoring our commitment to the youth and their families in the congregation? Are we devoting enough planning, resources and personnel to that effort?*
 - Feels like youth and families are very much a backseat priority
 - Feels like we need to punch up our youth program with more resources, human and financial
- *Is there anything else we should be asking ourselves about vision?*

MISSION

We will create opportunities to engage in spiritual exploration and worship, Jewish learning and culture, and the pursuit of justice.

- *Is our Zoom and limited F-2-F presence providing opportunities for people to connect with Har Shalom and find value in that connection?*

- getting positive feedback re our Zoom presence from participants
- some tell me that they are more inclined to participate via Zoom than they might be in-person (reasons: local travel, discomfort in groups, long-distance travel)

- *Are we creating opportunities in each area?*

- *Spiritual exploration and worship*
worship 3x month, (meditation-weekly)

- *Jewish learning and culture*

LWTR, Beit Midrash, Torah study, Hebrew learning, Atidaynu
State-wide opportunities
Online opportunities are good to retain

- *Pursuit of justice*

Doing only individually, now.
Form a committee
expand MIC collaboration

- *Is there anything else we might want to consider?*

- more worship?
- online meditation?
- calendar of community involvement?
- expanded youth program
- young families programming

Goal 1: Financial stability for the near-term through positive cash flow, matching grants and networking in order to achieve a cash reserve by the end of the fiscal year.

- *What progress have we made on this goal?*
 - We got nerve-wrackingly close to insolvency this fall but the winter appeal recharged our operating account
 - The winter appeal took off when we published free-standing reminders with Constant Contact and added the appeal to the weekly. Let's remember this lesson for future appeals.

• *What are our strategies for continuing progress?*

- We need a calendar, with follow up methods integrated into it.
- We need a committee of at least two or more to think through approaches and report to board to recommend actions
- Create legacy giving program
- Begin an endowment

Finances

- Follow up for end-of-year appeal letter (in weekly, free-standing appeal, web site)
Our last appeal took off only after we publicized it in weekly and through free-standing messages from Constant Contact. We have to follow up a letter with other reminders.
- With only a few months reserve in the bank account, seems appropriate to think about back up plans and discuss as a professional consideration with rabbi
When we got very low on resources in our bank account before the last appeal, I was concerned that the Board did not speak to me with professional concern for my position. Seems like we should take on the ethos that our clergy's position is something to nurture and protect, that if we are an organization that engages a rabbi or cantor, that we simultaneously recognize the magnitude of the value they bring to the community, make a commitment to support them, and communicate accordingly.

Other Financial

- Establish a three-year calendar to set dates for appeals
- Create a financial team; do trainings on best practices
- Adopt synagogue-oriented software for data tracking
- Create legacy giving program
- Begin an endowment

Goal 2: Increase net membership by at least five family units in 12-18 months by energizing the Membership committee and through collaboration with the rabbi.

- *What progress have we made on this goal?* **EXCEEDED!!!!!!**

1. Hunter (Melisse, Jeff and baby)
2. Lydia Schmidt
3. Melissa Pernell
4. Jim Hatley
5. Marcia Butzell
6. Donna Upson and Dave Correia
7. Naomi Alhadeff
8. Edie Kort?

- *What are our strategies for continuing progress?*

???

Goal 3: Expand our educational, cultural and social justice programming during this fiscal year resulting in greater membership/volunteer engagement (measured in volunteer hours).

- *What progress have we made on this goal?*

- Pandemic has made this impractical at the current time. We could form a mini-think tank to consider this deeply.
- How do we intend to track volunteer hours?

- *What are our strategies for continuing progress?*

Communication plan

Create a plan for updating web site, Facebook, using instagram account, involve volunteer or Ari?

- Policy: no emails from Constant Contact on Shabbat
- Policy: nothing new in weekly that we do not all see--all contributors must copy to all, "no surprises"
- Policy: Use HS calendar for scheduling Zoom use, if multiple users
- Web page management: need redundancy, more people who can update and add content