

Report to Har Shalom Board, December 22, 2021 to January 18, 2022

Rabbi Laurie Franklin



Abstract

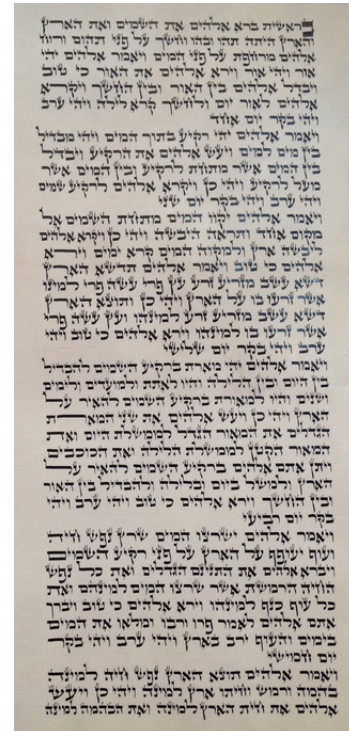
- *Tu Bishvat seder was a rockin' success!*
- *Beit Midrash, Lunch with the Rabbi, Hebrew well-attended and active*
- *New Biblical Hebrew class for adults, in progress*
- *New Bmitz Hebrew class, in progress*
- *My calendar of Har Shalom activities and appointments is available to every board member, using your Har Shalom email address and password to gain access to the Har Shalom office suite calendar*

Services and Special Observances

- 4th Friday 4 All, once/month
- First Saturday Torah service, once/month
- Musical Kabbalat Shabbat/once/month
- Tu Bishvat Seder 1/16

Education, Adult and Youth

- Atidaynu, bi-monthly on Sundays
- NEW Bmitz Hebrew, January 1/16 start, 18 weeks in 2022
- Torah study, once/month...Proposal for Rabbi facilitation (see attached)
- Special Torah study with Hebrew focus, once/month
- Beit Midrash, Mondays, weekly "Kohelet"
- Lunch with the Rabbi, Wednesdays, weekly, *Greatest Hits of Talmud*
- NEW Biblical Hebrew for Beginners, Wednesdays, 20-week series
- Biblical Hebrew, continuing, Wednesdays, 20-week series



Har Shalom Administrative & Planning

- Weekly meet-up with Past-President Holly Kingsford, President Dave Jolles, and Bert Chessin/Google doc with notes
- Content for weekly
- Atidaynu planning
- Tu Bishvat seder planning

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**
 - Notifications to Har Shalom about Texas synagogue prayer vidgil and security meetings
 - Missoula County Public Schools, I-VALUE, monthly meetings.
 - Missoula Interfaith Collaborative Clergy group
 - MHRN Board member: Montana Human Rights Network
 - Missoula County Government: justice, equity, diversity, inclusion task force meeting, every other week
 - Interaction with Israel Consulate for Pacific Northwest to set up new Zoom session in January, date TBA

Torah Study Proposal to Board 1_18_2022

Background:

A congregant has offered to underwrite the Rabbi's facilitation of weekly Torah study at an appropriate level of compensation for the Rabbi's professional role. The congregant says that the Rabbi has a depth of understanding of Torah Hebrew and context that is lacking when she is not present. Currently, the Rabbi's contract specifies presence at only one Saturday Torah study per month.

Beginning in Spring 2020 and until her vacation in June 2021, the Rabbi was present at every weekly Torah study, with the exception, after mid-2020, of the First Saturday Torah study sessions, days on which she also led the morning Shabbat service. Initially, she provided this non-contractual, additional leadership because she was the only person in Har Shalom leadership with a Zoom account, and it took Har Shalom several months to acquire an account. Further, she felt it was important to the integrity of the Har Shalom community during the pandemic to provide additional, encouraging presence to bind us together. After her 2021 summer vacation, she returned to her once-a-month contract obligation. The congregant making the offer has been attending Torah study regularly and has stated that she wants to go deep into the text, and as of July, misses the insight and learning that the Rabbi brings to Torah study.

This is a positive development because it provides a means for recognizing the value that the Rabbi brings to the congregation. It might also serve as a stimulus to fund more or even the rest of the Rabbi's salary at an appropriate level. When we have discussed the rabbi salary issue, we have generally agreed that we do not presently have the resources to increase the Rabbi's salary. In a recent discussion, President Dave Jolles suggested that the Board might supplement the congregant's donation toward Torah study, if needed.

This proposal is a starting point for creating an arrangement whereby the Rabbi would facilitate three (in months with four Shabbats) or four (in months with five Shabbats) additional Torah study sessions each month. The Rabbi recognizes that taking on three or four additional Torah study sessions each month is a big commitment. It means that she will work every weekend for Har Shalom, except for her annual vacation time.

Rather than approaching the donation as piecework, that is, as an hourly wage for each session, it might be helpful to set up the donation (and Har Shalom's contribution, if necessary) as an annual grant that is used to supplement the Rabbi's salary and is pro-rated to align with the Rabbi's current 2021-2023 contract. This way, the payment to the Rabbi comes from Har Shalom, not a congregant. Also, if the rabbi needs the flexibility to take off an occasional Saturday, possibly once or twice a year, it does not change the compensation.

To arrive at an appropriate level of compensation, let's do a brief calculation: There are 52 weeks in a year. One week in each of the twelve months of the Rabbi's participation are now covered by Har Shalom, leaving 40 weeks. At a rate of \$50/hr, each two-hour session of Torah study calls for \$100 of compensation, which includes prep time. If multiplied by 40 weeks, the result is \$4,000/year. The rabbi's current contract includes salary for a four-week vacation time. Thus, the Rabbi would be responsible for facilitating Torah study for 48 weeks/year (that is, 52 weeks minus 4 weeks), with flexibility for an occasional absence for a professional conference or similar need. Illness would be covered by the current contractual sick-leave allowance.

One issue to rethink is the timing of the First Saturday service and Torah study on the first Saturday of the month. Right now, The service runs from 9:30 am to 11 am and Torah study follows from noon to 2 pm. Currently, the Rabbi leads the service but does not facilitate Torah study. The Rabbi's Shabbat practice includes Shabbat lunch with her family. If Shabbat Torah study on first Saturday is held from noon to 2 pm, that makes a family Shabbat lunch impossible. The Torah study regulars had a chance to weigh in on three possibilities:

1. Torah study immediately follows the service, with a 15-min break, from 11:15 am to 1:15 pm.
2. Begin the service at 9 am rather than 9:30 am, end at 10:30 am, and Torah study follows, with a 15-min break at 10:45 and goes to 12:45 pm.
3. First Saturday Torah study takes on a different format, that is, is a one-hour seminar either before the service from 8:30 to 9:30 am, or immediately after from 11:15 am to 12:15 pm noon. The preparation time for the one-hour session would be akin to directly facilitating a two-hour session.

After two discussions and an opportunity to respond to a survey, the Torah study group unanimously reached consensus to recommend option 2, that is, begin the service at 9 am, and Torah study following at 10:45 am.

Other issues to consider:

- Shall we re-evaluate at some intervals, such as 3 to 6 months? Maybe a logical, practical time to re-evaluate is early June, before the end of year one of the current two-year contract, which comes on June 30?
- Our Rabbi-Har Shalom 2021-2023 contract would need to be revised to reflect change in duties and salary, plus any changes from a re-evaluation decision. I would be happy to help draft the language for those changes. My current contract is available for view and comments at

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1X9vnhx-u1-P2S-ZHDhoRIXBDd2TYmpTz/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=117022629151539441419&rtpof=true&sd=true>