

Fellow Congregants,

Discussions about a possible merger or partnership with Temple Sinai are proceeding deliberately but positively, and I want to update you on those developments.

A coordinating committee of 14 representatives – seven from both temples – has met three times to consider a general framework for such a partnership, and feels such a move could have widespread benefits for both congregations, and for progressive Judaism in the Buffalo area. But discussions remain preliminary, and any concrete recommendations that may ultimately be made will be finalized only after approval by our Board of Trustees and a vote of the full congregation. While we are a long way from that point, the joint coordinating committee is encouraged by the progress so far, and has therefore set up sub-committees to consider, in more specific detail, what a possible merger or partnership would look like.

Sub-committees will have two co-chairpersons – one from each temple – and in most cases a total of six to eight members, divided evenly between TBA and Sinai. It will be the responsibility of each sub-committee to explore a particular area of temple life, and to offer reports and recommendations to the larger coordinating committee.

Because issues of worship and ritual are of central importance, the sub-committee dealing with those aspects was the initial group to be formed, and recently held its first meeting. That group will be reviewing similarities and differences in present practices at Beth Am and Sinai, with a view toward integrating them in a way that preserves the traditions and integrity of both temples. This sub-committee will be working closely with Rabbi Tanenbaum and Rabbi Alex Lazarus-Klein of Temple Sinai in that regard. Judy Henn, our Vice President of Worship, leads Beth Am's contingent to the religious subcommittee. Other members are Suzette Stringer and Peter Simon.

Another sub-committee, now being put together, will deal with the many financial and budgetary details of a possible partnership. Joseph Glickman, our Vice President of Finance, will head the Beth Am contingent.

Other sub-committees will deal with membership, governance, clergy and staff, education, buildings and grounds, social and charitable efforts and other areas. Congregants interested in taking part in these groups should contact me at tlsawn@roadrunner.com. In addition, please feel free to relay any suggestions or comments to our other coordinating committee members. They are:

Gary Bluestein, garblu@aol.com. 639-0224.
Joseph Glickman, JosephGlickman@aol.com. 698-8984.
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Peter Simon, petesimon15@aol.com, 861-1717.

We welcome and encourage your input, and will continue to keep you informed.

Happy Passover,
Todd Sugarman
President