

This note is to provide you with an update on the status of the activities surrounding the union of Solel and Lakeside. As you know, this summer 18 Working Groups composed of members from both congregations were formed to recommend how our newly combined synagogue will work. Since our kick-off in June all groups have embraced their missions in earnest and started to tackle the many questions and priorities to be addressed. For a majority of the Working Groups the process is that each group will continue to hold meetings over the coming months and the outcomes of those sessions are actionable recommendations to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will then in turn seek approvals as appropriate from our respective Boards of Directors. Members who are not participating in specific Working Groups but have opinions or questions are welcome to contact any of the appropriate Working Group co-chairs or Steering Committee members, and the names of those members are listed below.

Following is a brief summary of progress to date on all of the groups:



NAMING: Everyone is anxious to know what we are going to be called. The working group surveyed the congregations on word association relating to congregational values for possible use as input in determining a name. They are committed to a collaborative process that will provide recommendations before the end of the calendar year.



ADMINISTRATION: The working group is reviewing employee handbooks, benefit programs and hiring practices.



ADULT EDUCATION: This working group has developed a mission statement and is working on a comprehensive list of demographic and common interest groups that we should target for 2019/2020 programming.



CARING COMMUNITY: This group surveyed what each congregation's current practices are, then conducted an open brainstorming session to identify new ideas for outreach. They will now be focusing on crystalizing some of them into formal recommendations.



COMMUNICATIONS: Among other things, this working group has coordinated all joint communication pieces (bookmarks and posters) under the **Stronger Together** byline and core values including *Dynamic, Enduring, Warm & Sustained*. They are working on messaging that will help unify all digital (including social media) and print formats, for both congregants as well as for driving new membership as well as working on plans for our new name once it has been decided.



FACILITIES: This working group developed a needs assessment survey for other groups to record their anticipated space and physical asset requirements. It also arranged for a visit with the original designer of Lakeside's ark to determine options for incorporating it into its new home, and set a meeting with an architectural firm to generate concepts for office remodeling. All information is being consolidated into a Facilities Master Plan with short-term and long-term visions.



FINANCE: This working group has a huge task and therefore has divided into four subgroups to undertake a deep dive into budget, revenue, expense and endowment issues.



FINE ARTS / DONOR RECOGNITION: Inventories of all plaques and art objects have been catalogued for both congregations and a rating system has been determined to help prioritize the hundreds of items. There has been a discussion on the use of rotating displays, flipbooks and possible electronic formats.



GOVERNANCE: The working group has reviewed the by-laws of both congregations, consulted with a recently merged congregation and reviewed its by-laws, and is actively consulting with the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) on best practices. It will be drafting a new set of by-laws and considering other possible governance-related recommendations.



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: This group has focused on possible capability needs with other working groups and has discussed the transition to ShulCloud as our collective database management system.



INNOVATIVE PRACTICES: This working group is researching ground-breaking practices in use at synagogues and other institutions across the country in search of ideas and inspiration to guide us in identifying 'best' and creative practices that we can incorporate as part of our new congregation. Their research entails a combination of personal interviews, internet study and examination of other available resources.



LIBRARY: Working in conjunction with the Facilities working group, a recommendation was made and adopted to modify the existing Family Resource Center at the Clavey Campus to serve as the primary location for the library collection. A significant goal of the new library is to have an expanded collection visible and accessible in a community gathering space. The working group is identifying duplicates in our collections, researching a possible transition to a digital cataloging system and other innovative library practices.



MEMBERSHIP: This working group is focusing on the identification of like-minded congregants who would be receptive to gathering in small groups to foster long-term connections within our joined communities. They are also targeting opportunities to add activities to specific existing events that will help promote relationship building.



PRE-SCHOOL: Given the lack of cooperation from DCFS, we are looking at the development of a Jewish track within the Montessori program that currently resides at Solel as the best option to offer full-day continuity for Lakeside Children's Center families.



RELIGIOUS SCHOOL / YOUTH ENGAGEMENT: The working group completed its primary charge of making recommendations for creating a combined Religious School (Lev Learning) Committee in advance of the first day of school. A new mission statement for the committee was developed. Over the summer the group assisted in integrating families and helped support a successful first day of school where 260 students and over 50 *madrichim* joined together in a lively kick-off program incorporating both children and adults.



SISTERHOOD / ROSH CHODESH / WRJ: This working group is looking at activities, and also focusing on developing combined mission and vision statements.



SOCIAL JUSTICE: This working group has created a list of priorities, some of which constitute programs, some initiatives, some represent strategies, and yet others are tactics. Initial top priorities will focus on voter engagement, gun violence and RAC Illinois. Beyond that, the group is working on a visioning statement that will carry us into next year when we are fully operating as one synagogue.



WORSHIP / MUSIC / HOLIDAYS: This working group sent representatives to each other's High Holy Day services to help provide more informed discussion on the many issues looking toward next year.

Working Group Co-Chairs

Administration: Stacey Wolfe & Bill Zucker

Adult Education: Marty Portnoy & Lynn Salit

Caring Community: Mary Solof & Karen Fineman

Communications: Ron Orgiefsky & Jason Rubinstein

Congregational Naming: Jaimie Flagg & Michael Ebner

Facilities: Paul Epner & Dan Rubin

Financial: Len Solof & Dan Levenson

Fine Arts/Donor Recognition: Wally Roberts & Ellen Gussin

Governance: Floyd Keene & Susan Kaden

Information Technology: Debbie Harris & Jason Meltzer

Innovative Practices: David Macknin & Denny Kessler

Library: Rich Leonard & Darryl Ebner

Membership/Social Activities: Sophia LaForce & Adrienne Levin

Pre-School: Shari Saratovsky

Religious School & Youth: Jim Schuster & Lou Hellebusch

Social Justice/Social Action: Diane Zidman & Wendy Rhodes

WRJ/Sisterhood/Rosh Chodesh: Janet Buckstein & Judith Golden

Worship/Music/Holidays: Mark Pos & Beth Sanchez

Steering Committee

Ross Elrebacher

Jen Gordon

Jack Kaplan

Holly Krakow

Betsy Lassar

Rob Lindner

Josh Lowitz

Larry Mason

Rabbi Evan Moffic

Cantor Jay O'Brien

Lori Rudman

Rick Schuster

Rabbi Ike Serotta