

Synagogue Life Council
Minutes May 9, 2011

IN ATTENDANCE: Ed Berger, Barbara Brodie, Leah Cotton, Madeline Friedman, Mary Marcus, Jane Poliakoff, Trudy Schwartz, Evelyn Sigafus

STAFF: Rabbi Eisen, Lynne Falkow-Strauss, Rabbi Gludt, Linda Roy

GUESTS: Ben Herman, Wally Marcus

Meeting called to order at 7:15 p.m. Minutes of March 14th meeting reviewed and accepted.
Rabbi Ben Herman delivered the opening prayer.

Recent Board Activities

Madeline Friedman

- Report of recent Board activities, stressing the majority of the last Board meeting focused on a detailed review of the budget.

Initiatives:

- Next Dor initiative sponsored by Synagogue 3000 – The ‘Next Dor’ initiative is a platform encouraging congregations to reach out to 20/30-somethings. After discussion, the SLC endorsed our participation in the program.
- Boomer Connection – After it was revealed that the Couples Connection is disbanding, a discussion group voiced concerns of how that generation might be best approached. A meeting between Rabbi Eisen, Evelyn Sigafus, Jane Poliakoff, and Barbara Brodie will review our synagogue members who fit in that category with the primary task of building a core group that might serve as a think tank and/or steering committee for renewed effort.
- Social Action/Mitzvah Day – As we will be participating in Or Chadash’s Food Festival, in an effort to collect food for the Food Bank, it was felt that we should focus on this initiative as a major Social Action Committee for next year.
- Renewal Task Force Recommendations:
 - Adult Lounge. It was thought that we should use different areas of the synagogue as lounge areas, making them accessible and available to people for gathering together to converse, relax, etc. Foreseeable opportunities include the “fishbowl” area, the foyer outside the entrance of the sanctuary, and the hallway between the Chapel and the Youth Center. The recommendation will go to the Board that the Facilities Committee and the Art Committee work together to address this issue so that people will have areas for planned or spontaneous informal social gatherings. It is also suggested that the Board consider making Wi-Fi available throughout the building.
 - Creating a culture of welcoming was addressed as part of the lounge discussion. The concern is that our building be welcoming and friendly to those who enter.
 - Creating a culture of volunteering. Wally Marcus reviewed the history of the development of the Volunteer Initiative, the volunteer data, and procedures to the present. There are a couple of increased opportunities for volunteering and responses to those who do volunteer need to be pursued. It is also suggested that both the staff and volunteers be trained with regard to how we can best work together.
 - Interfaith Outreach. Rabbi asked that a small group be put together to help him 1) create a document that will communicate the efforts with which we are already engaged, 2) that we create a myth-and-facts campaign concerning our approach toward an integration of interfaith families for publication in the Arizona Jewish Post. Some sort of welcome sign and/or greeting needs to be visible for people who come in to see that we are reaching out to interfaith couples.
 - More work needs to be done to publicize the non-sectarian section of the cemetery to our congregation and the community at large.
 - Communication. It was decided this should be handed over to the executive director.
 - Logo

- Form and function of PR
- Phone/program access
- Tag line
- Library
 - Barbara Brodie and Carol Sumner will be working together chairing an effort to renew the presence of the library in our congregation

Religious Advisory Task Force Report

- The Meturgeman Project is up and soon running. People who would like to participate are welcome to volunteer.
- Minyan – It is hoped that when needed, a phone committee will be able to outreach to invite people to participate.
- Saturday Morning Services – It is felt that some of the youth services need to be combined so there is more frequency to such opportunities.
- Ma'alot Minyan – May be disbanding now that there is more participation in the sanctuary.
- Mourners' Class – It is felt that there may be a need for continuing education on Jewish approaches toward grief
- A Shir Hadash Service is being planned. It will be a 'Friday Night Live' type of approach to our Shabbat service.
- High Holy Days – The Chapel Service will continue at least for this year.

Klay Kodesh & Staff Reports

Rabbi Gludt

- Religious School is completely staffed.
- The 8th Grade presented a Yom HaShoah Program for the entire school.
- The 15th will be our last day of Religious School and will include a Teacher Appreciation Brunch.

Lynne Falkow-Strauss

- The preschool is fully staffed. They just finished a very successful and well received Teacher Appreciation week.
- There will be a kindergarten next year with 12 in the class.

Event Reports

Membership Committee

- The zip code parties were well received though participation varied. It is felt that the parties should be put into abeyance next year; and we should work on such things as a zip code Kiddush. It was suggested that along with the PR that is put out regarding that Kiddush we also encourage people to come even if they do not attend services that morning (and yes! that was a suggestion from the Rabbi!).
- Northwest Service – It was felt that the service is important for both retention of people who are already members, as well as some degree of outreach. The issues for its continuation include who will lead the service. It was felt that it is a concept worth pursuing, perhaps even expanding with a dairy pot luck dinner.

Next meeting: August 15, 2011