

YOUNGSTOWN Congregational Collaboration Implementation Committee

RITUAL, ARTIFACT and EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE

Meeting of February 3, 2021

Attendance: Elliot Legow, Chair; Booker Kessler, Harriet Schor, Brigitt Berk, Voting Members of YCCIC; Sandy Kessler, Ohev Tzedek; Mark Perlman, El Emeth, Suzyn Schwebel-Epstein, Youngstown Area Jewish Federation; Rabbi Paul Winnig, Rodef Sholom interim rabbi as committee consultants

The function of the Ritual, Artifacts and Education Subcommittee is to:

- A. Evaluate the ritual needs of all members of a unified Jewish congregation and how they shall be accommodated.**
- B. Inventory all Artifacts, Artwork Torahs, Plaques and Archives of each congregation and how they shall be preserved**
- C. Review the current and future provision of Jewish education for youth and adults**

A. RITUAL:

Underlying all ritual aspects of the congregation are the guiding principles:

- 1. We are open to, accepting and respectful of all Jewish religious traditions**
- 2. We are egalitarian in all our religious and sacred principles**
- 3. We wish to engage all congregants with services that are inclusive, flexible and ever-evolving**

Discussion of Religious Services:

1. SHABBAT SERVICES

Mark Perlman agreed that the initial weekly service schedule could be:

- Friday night Reform services
- Saturday morning Conservative services
- Saturday evening Havdalah service

The committee discussed the development of prayer books over the past decades which have diverted from the traditional formats in both Reform and Conservative services, which are now much closer in content than ever before

Similarly, Mark noted that over the decades El Emeth services have become less traditionally conservative, include more English and more music, while Elliot noted that over the decades Rodef Sholom services have been less traditionally Reform including more Hebrew and more congregational

participation

Eventually, we will want all congregants to be comfortable attending any service and no longer distinguish between the "Reform" service and the "Conservative" service.

We will want to hire a Rabbi who is comfortable and competent leading Conservative and Reform services [which Rabbi Winnig says should not be difficult]

Lay leaders are available for both the Reform and Conservative services

2. HIGH HOLY DAYS

Concurrent Conservative and Reform services could be held by any of these approaches:

- a. One in the main sanctuary; one in the chapel
- b. One in the sanctuary; one in another building, options include:
 1. At least initially in one of the Temple buildings not yet sold
 2. At the JCC
 3. At a rented space, e.g. a church
 4. At one of the Temples that had been sold on the condition that we retain the right to hold services there on High Holy Days

Preference for all congregants to be attending services in the same building and at the same time so all congregants may attend before service meals and/or after service Onegs or receptions.

3. MUSIC

As for other aspects of services music options [including which tunes are sung, what instrumentation is used,] should be varied, inclusive and flexible. We want to encourage participation by congregants but that does not exclude the inclusion of some "beautiful cantorial singing".

The goal is for music to be spiritually enlightening and engaging.

4. OTHER CLERGY?

Possibilities:

- a. A full-time cantor who is the community education director as well as service leader
- b. A once-a -month cantor who is brought in from Cleveland or Pittsburgh to lead services and/or co-officiate
- c. A high holy day cantor
- d. A high holy day Rabbi to lead the conservative service

Choice dictated at least in part by the congregation's budget and/or specific donations to underwrite a second clergy person

5. THE CONGREGATION WILL HAVE ONE RITUAL COMMITTEE

6. OTHER RITUAL ISSUES:

Mikvah: suggestion made that this could be off-site from the temple itself

Wearing of kippot, tallit is an individual decision of each member
Kitchen: preferably one kitchen that is kosher and one that is non-kosher;
but recognizing that it is not difficult or costly “to kosher” a kitchen
In hiring full-time or part-time clergy we will insure that interfaith
marriages can be performed
Standards for conversion: **any person converted by a Rabbi should be
considered Jewish and welcome to the congregation.**

II. ARTIFACTS

Consolidation of Artifacts, Torahs, Plaques, Archives Specifically:

1. Inventory of Torahs; how many do we need; what to do with “excess”
2. Inventory of artifacts, art; do we retain all? What to do with “excess”
3. Memorial and other plaques
4. Archives
5. Stained glass windows:

First steps: INVENTORY all of above; engage non-committee members at each congregation to take inventory; photographic record; measurements
We will need to research donor letters that may restrict or disposition of donated items.

Second step: Provide inventory details to the Buildings sub-committee to determine how and where all to be displayed or stored. A possible concept: *Development of a Youngstown Jewish Heritage Collection* in the building housing the new congregation; or engage with Mahoning Valley Historical Society; or consider digital archive for at least some of the artifacts

IIII EDUCATION: engage with CJE board; do we bring education in-house to the new congregation or does it remain a separate entity?