

Minutes for Kol Ami Mid-Year Congregation Meeting
January 27, 2013, 5-7 pm

1. Kavanah
2. Agenda

Two new items were added to the agenda:

- Start time for Shabbat services (Joan G)
- Renewal of affiliation with Alef Jewish Renewal Movement (Herb CL)

3. Review and approve minutes from June 2012 congregation meeting

Herb CL noted that there were some errors in the minutes, specifically that the candidate slate was not approved by consensus as there was a contested election for VP. Herb asked that the minutes be sent out prior to the meeting for the members to review. Don K noted that the minutes were sent out back in July. Mary K agreed that they should be sent out immediately prior to the meeting. It was agreed to defer the adoption of the minutes for further review in the interest of time.

4. President's Report – Mary K

Mary said that both JCEP and adult ed were growing well. Most of the committees are more robust too, except for fundraising, which needs additional volunteers. Mary praised Janice CL for taking the initiative to start the Care and Concern committee, which now has several members performing different functions. Children and Family also is functioning well with three members. Mary noted Kola mi members are expected to support Kol Ami in two ways: by dues and by volunteering. Three roles that need to be filled immediately are:

- Shabbat host coordinator (Mindi W has been filling in temporarily)
- 2nd night Seder coordinator (Laura B, Harriet, Linda A and Herb all volunteered to help with this)
- Nominating committee to fill positions for next year (talk to Don if you are interested)

Please step up and volunteer for a committee, or if you see another need that isn't being met.

5. Treasurer's report – Erv W

Erv noted that our cash position was good, that most of the large bills for the year had been paid (high holidays, Jewish Federation dues, UU rent). There is about \$400 in the Ark Fund and \$2500 in the Rabbi's discretionary fund. Mary asked that any donations be sent via check to Erv so they can be tracked for auditing purposes. Noel L noted that the Tzadakah cans are used for the Rabbi's fund. Rabbi Leila said she can get you a tax letter if you need one. Erv said he was also working on the tax letters for members and that members should let him know if they see any errors. Some receivables were still outstanding.

Membership is currently 23 singles, 32 families and 1 friend. The budget is largely up to date. The challenge grant was close to the goal of \$4200, and the ICE grant was close to \$1000. We are currently ahead on dues, which include an estimated \$5600 in adjustments, although that number could change. In response to questions, Erv noted that about 10% of total revenue was discounted to about 6 members due to need. Harriet encouraged members to buy the remaining poetry books. Richard R said

the suggested donation was \$18, please email me and send the check to Erv. Erv would look into question about Bnei Mitzvah income, which Don noted are not always paid in the same fiscal year as the Bnei Mitzvah. Erv noted that our revenue was frontloaded, with \$62k out of \$65 already in, and that we were on target regarding expenses for the year. Emily SG said more outreach was needed, Mary suggested she talk to Gail S. Erv noted there is \$4k in the Mark and Mindy Weisenbloom memorial fund, and that Care and Concern was short of funds due to unexpected demand. Rabbi Leila noted how important a small gift could be to members who were sick and urged members to donate. Erv said the rabbi's fund gets \$500 in dues plus \$2500 in donations. Rabbi Leila said she uses about \$300/month, usually to help members in need meet basic expenses (medicine, utilities, food, rent). She used to make donations but has cut down on those. There are several members who are unemployed.

6. Rabbi's report

RL described a vision of Kol Ami for the future that included a permanent home, classes in subjects like yoga, chanting, and meditation, a committee to orient new members, senior activities, JCEP classes on Saturdays, etc. The way to get there is to increase membership by 2-3 times, which would still be small enough to be intimate. This would create additional volunteers to prevent burnout in leadership. Each member should recruit 2-3 people. The book "Renewal of the Jewish Spirit" describes how to grow your synagogue – a copy will be donated to Kol Ami.

7. Shabbaton

Mary K wanted to discuss Shabbaton proposal, to be funded by the "Mark Weisenbloom Let's Learn Together Fund." Jane S described the need to create a task force with reps from ritual, adult ed and family and children committees to organize. Rabbi L described them; both would take place locally sometime next (school) year and involve Friday night and Saturday daytime activities/services.

- Kaballah with Rabbi Elber and Cantor Brown. This would be a religious-focused event with kid activities on Friday eve and adult-focused on Saturday.
- Israel-Palestine conflict with Prof. Peleg, whose approach is historical and humanistic rather than overtly political. This would be a more secular program, but services could incorporate a more Middle Eastern flavor.

Support was mentioned for both proposals, but #2 generated more discussion. Rabbi L said we could invite a Jewish-Muslim dialogue group based in MD and perhaps other guests. Herb said a similar event at AU brought in 500 people. Janice suggested outsiders could be asked for a donation to raise funds. Richard R suggested that time be built in to get to know other members. Carolyn suggested that the ritual pieces and education pieces should be separate so members could choose which parts they most wanted to attend. Mary asked for volunteers to let Mary or Adam know. Susan F said she would serve on the committee.

8. Bnei Mitzvah policy

Mary said a committee from Children and family had proposed changes to the youth BM policy. Key changes include: 1) lower service attendance requirement, 2) flexibility in # of verses chanted, 3) clarification of role of non-Jewish parent. Steering reviewed the changes and have recommended for adoption. Change would take effect at the end of June and would not affect those currently scheduled

for this spring. The changes are mainly codification of past practice and lessons learned, not meant to make the process more onerous.

A friendly amendment was offered to add language to a sentence that appears on p. 5, 8, 12. In each instance, the amended text will read "...learn to chant 21 verses.....from the Torah scroll, and may be shared with family, friends, or co-Bnei Mitzvah." (new text in red.)

Motion to approve was made and seconded. Changes were adopted by consensus.

9. Committee reports

Fundraising – Noel passed out and collected Tzadakah boxes, noting that they collected over \$100 for the Rabbi's discretionary fund at the last meeting. If you want a box see me, if you want to drop off come any Sunday during JCEP or send me an email.

Care and concern – Janice CL described multiple teams:

- Bereavement team led by Mindi W
- Healing team led by Britt
- Sacred aging team led by Harriet and Susan. Harriet offered to assist anyone dealing with aging family/friends.
- Yarzheit team led by Toni. Goal is to provide minyan for kaddish.
- Illness team led by Janice. If she doesn't see you for a while, she will call.

Children and Family – Erika noted Purim celebration is Feb 24

Ritual – Jane needs service leaders for March 15 and March 30.

Strategic Planning – Carolyn said this is the third year of the three-year plan, so a new plan will need to be prepared. Issues to address include guidelines for Steering, creating a master calendar, administrative structure and succession, evaluating the work of the committees, a possible membership committee, relations with the reconstructionist federation, outreach, and Rabbi Leila's vision for the community.

Tikun Olam – Peggy noted the recent stream cleanup event and said goal was four activities per year – shelter project in winter, food bank in the fall, 2 others. Mary will ask TO to look at guidelines for proposing and selecting projects for June meeting.

10. new items

Start time for Friday services: Mary said Joan had suggested moving up start time to 7 (from 7:30) to accommodate families. Much discussion about the optimal time ensued. Rabbi L suggested a 7:00 pm Kabbalat for families followed by an 8pm evening service for adults. Ed B suggested we alternate start times by week. Jane suggested we try out an earlier time to see how it goes. Mary agreed and said let's pick a date, perhaps in March, to experiment.

Affiliation with Alef education: Herb noted we are a "reconstructionist and renewal" congregation and suggested that affiliation with Alef could be useful to market ourselves. Rabbi said many members are

not familiar with renewal, but we could do an education or renewal event after the high holidays. Mary said the issue was on the agenda for Steering, which would probably refer to Adult Ed.

Rabbi's 13th year: Rabbi Leila noted that this would be her 13th year with kol Ami and suggested that the community organize a celebration to raise funds sometime in 2013. She has a list of names of friends and colleagues who would consider a donation.

Don K – Annual meeting is June 9.

Adjournment.