

Kol Ami Steering Committee Meeting 1/11/18

Attendees: Rabbi Gilah Langner, Herb Levy, Lynda Erinoff, Shana Harbour, Jon Baumgarten, Harriet Epstein, Madeleine Levy, Debbie Linick, Michael Linick, Eric Rosenberg, Mindy Rudell, Anne Salzberg, Jane Shulman, Erv Walter.

Absent: David Sidransky, Ted Joseph, Mindi Weisenbloom, Mattie Cohan

1. **Blessing**

2. **Approval of agenda** - Jon motioned to approve, Michael seconded. The agenda was approved.
3. **Approval of minutes:** Debbie motioned and Jon seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

4. **Committee reports**

- a. **Care and Concern:** Harriet asked for any feedback on her updated committee descriptions for the website. The committee will also assist Mary Kuntz in her recent loss.
- b. **JCEP:** Mindy Rudell also provided an updated description for the website. JCEP does 4 events/year. The Hanukkah program was very successful. We will next host Tu'BiShvat, Emily Schwartz Greco is sending out the sign up genius to coordinate. JCEP will then host Purim.
- c. **Membership:** Debbie Linick reported that the committee is moving forward with a "Book Buddies" program with Rabbi Gilah reading to young children about Purim on Sunday, Feb 4 followed by a craft project. This event is in coordination with Growing Jewish Families. The Steering Committee discussed that we currently have a gap in the congregation with very few members having young children and it may require resources or focus to build this demographic.
- d. **Ritual:** There will be a meeting on Feb 11 about how non-Jewish family members can participate in congregation rituals, particularly aliyot.
- e. **JCRC:** Lynda reminded people that Jewish Advocacy Day is Jan 30 in Richmond, individuals are encouraged to sign up.

5. **Community Coordinator Report:** Herb is still working to solve the problem with Mail Poet mail transmissions being received. Mail Poet also doesn't currently allow the transmission of more than 1 graphic per email. Herb will look at other email services if these problems cannot get resolved.

6. **Treasurer Report:** We are awaiting a \$6,000 rent bill from UUCA. After payment we will be in a similar cash flow as last year. We are 4 families and 3 individuals short in new members. Two new members joined, but two members left. Michael suggested a discussion about dues increase since we are not attracting enough new members and have predominantly fixed costs. Lynda agreed, noting that there will also be a rent increase from UUCA.

7. Nominating & Leadership Development Committee: Debbie suggested that it would be helpful if the nominations task force might envision itself as a committee that operated for longer than the few months leading up to the annual meeting. The Committee could be involved in not only nominating new steering committee and committee chairs, but recruiting congregants for volunteer roles and fostering leadership development. Debbie offered to draft a brief mission statement for such a committee. Rabbi Gilah supported the idea of nurturing members to greater congregation involvement. Herb also offered that members might have new ideas of areas we can work within. Michael motioned for a new Nominating and Leadership Development Committee that would be year-round, it was unanimously approved.

8. Merging Schmooze and Program Committee: Rabbi Gilah asked that this discussion be postponed for a later Steering Committee Meeting.

9. Shabbat Hosting Policy: Lynda noted that there are many empty Shabbat hosting dates and it is difficult for the Shabbat coordinator to fill those dates. Rather than ask people to select dates, we are considering a shift to selecting dates for individuals so the calendar is equitably filled. This method was used in the past. Michael noted that some congregants have difficulty hosting and that needs to be permitted. It should be communicated very clearly that the Shabbat assignments are voluntary and for individuals who are not able, they can contribute in other ways. Mindy noted that teachers contribute much more time and should not be asked to host Shabbat in addition to their teaching. Rabbi Gilah agreed that teachers were not being asked to host Shabbat. Herb and Harriet noted that Shabbat hosts formerly were asked to find a replacement but Madeleine mentioned that she is comfortable with helping to adjust dates for hosts if there are scheduling conflicts. The JCEP participants pointed out that families in the congregation may be very put off by being assigned a volunteer role when they are already very engaged in JCEP or other volunteer responsibilities for their kids. Madeleine noted that this is the intention of the policy adjustment: families are not being asked to host Shabbat when they are already volunteering with JCEP. Debbie motioned that individuals help redraft the letter about hosting assignments so we can revisit this topic at an upcoming Steering discussion. Meanwhile, Madeleine will send emails to secure hosts for January and February until that policy is implemented. Michael seconded. There was no dissent.

10. How can Kol Ami better resolve disputes? Eric suggested that when we need to address conflicts, we want to do so using best techniques and perhaps professional mediators. Eric was also concerned that members of Steering Committee were not made aware of the problem when it arose. Rabbi Gilah did consider offering a Beit Din to help resolve this issue and did consult with other Rabbi mentors about how to resolve this. Lynda thanked Eric and Rabbi Gilah for offering the mediation and rabbinic resources to help resolve conflicts. Eric offered that there might be times when a secular mediator would be more suited to offer neutral advice than a rabbi.