

**Annual Meeting 2016**  
**Executive Director Remarks**  
**Arlene J. Frank**

Welcome to the Isaac Agree Downtown Synagogue's 2016 Annual Meeting. We're so pleased to have you with us tonight to hear about our progress, and participate in voting on by-laws changes as well as Directors and Officers for the Board.

I stood in front of you one year ago, like the proverbial deer in the headlights, having just one month of work under my belt. I now have the privilege of finishing my first year as Executive Director of our Downtown Synagogue. There was, and continues to be, much to learn, many members of our community to meet, abundant tasks to accomplish, and some stress and anxiety over building issues and shepherding change. Thank you to the Board of Directors for their leadership, to the core of lay leaders for their insights and assistance, and to the members for their enthusiasm and support.

I am fortunate to work with skilled team players on our growing staff: Vicki Sitron, our Program Coordinator for 8 months, Julie Flashner, our Administrative Assistant for just under one and a half years, and our esteemed Rabbi, Ariana Silverman, for just about 4 months. So you see, we're a new team at this 95 year old historic and iconic Synagogue. And we are building on the incredible work that has been accomplished in the preceding years, moving the Synagogue forward to growth and positive change.

Some of the ways we're moving forward include boring, but necessary building maintenance – replumbing the kitchen sink, tidying up and clearing out, upgrading our internet and wifi, bringing in a better cleaning service. But some of the more exciting changes involve innovative and engaging programming and community connections: A sampling of recent programs includes: a Detroit conversation with local writer Marsha Music, a presentation on urban farming with Malik Yakini, a conversation on the election with Detroit Free Press editor Stephen Henderson, and a salmon-curing class with local Chef Aaron Egan. We brought in Urban Initiative Exchange's Lauren Hood to share a racism deep dive, Frannie Shepherd-Bates to talk about the Shakespeare in Prison program, two more successful House of Synagogue Dance Parties, a presentation on the Regional Transit Authority in conjunction with Detroit Jews for Justice, our Gen S

program which brings people together to volunteer their time with us to benefit local agencies and organizations, Shabbat yoga, and a Tai Chi primer. And of course we continue our partnership with Eden Gardens, raising food and consciousness in the city. Much work is to be accomplished still as we inch closer to putting up our fire escape (yes, it is going to happen), replace our roof (thank you to Jeff Kidorf, architect and member of our Capital Improvements Committee for courageously ascending onto the roof to inspect it). We will take the next steps to put into reality the beautiful renovation of our building, we're in the process of planning for Next Year in Detroit for our High Holy Day observances, and we will continue to creatively and meaningfully engage our members and supporters in active participation at our hub of Jewish life here in the heart of Detroit.

Thank you for so warmly inviting me into the Downtown Synagogue community. I look forward to another year of engaging with you and making more progress!