

Minutes of the Congregational Meeting of Congregation Kol Shalom December 16, 2018

The meeting was called to order by the President, Howard Salob, at 10:00 AM
Motion to approve the June 2018 minutes by Joel Stein, seconded by Fred Sussman.
Motion passed.

At the start of the meeting, we do not quite have a quorum.

Officers' Reports

President: Thank you all for coming. The Board has been working hard on numerous activities, including a potential merger with Kneseth Israel which we'll discuss later. Our schools are thriving. Everything is moving along. Our new rabbi is fitting in very nicely with our congregation and providing numerous classes. This year we are hosting Winter Relief rather than just supporting St. Philip's; we will have a report on that later.

VP: Ira Snyder is in Florida and has no report. Calendar questions should be directed to Mary who is in contact with Ira.

Treasurer: We are halfway through our fiscal year and for the moment we are okay. We took in \$257,101.00 and laid out \$254,841.00 for a positive of \$2,260.00 so far. We do have some unexpected expenses that will affect the bottom line by the end of the year. Mostly they deal with security improvements for the building. If we collect what we expect and spend what we projected, we should be good.

Helaine Betnun moved to accept the Treasurer's report. Motion carried.

Committee Reports

Winter Relief: Marian Figlio, co-chair of Winter Relief along with Janice Krasnow, reported that we are all set for Winter Relief, which starts on Tuesday and ends Friday. All volunteer slots are filled. A special thank you to those doing transportation and overnight shifts: Rabbi Wohl, Ben Weiner, Miriam Lloyd, Robert Heller, Dennis Hawver, Ari Tannenbaum, Ron Katz, & Kate Penn. Thanks to Allison Charapp for help with food service preparations. Thank you to Paul Rosoff and Crofton Care & Rehabilitation Center for providing 3 mornings of hot breakfast. Thank you to Ari Tannenbaum and Mark Weiner for expanding our wifi access in time for use by our Winter Relief guests. Thanks to all who donated supplies. Thanks to St. Philip's for lending us their van to transport guests. Kol Shalom volunteers of all ages are participating in this endeavor, with preschool students making cookies and placemats; DRRS students making blankets; and USY students doing host activities.

From Jan. 2-7, St. Philip's will have their rotation hosting Winter Relief. As in years past, we will support their effort by volunteering manpower. Once we have finished

our hosting, Janice will send out a link to the St. Philip's SignUp Genius webpage if you would like to participate there.

Judaica Shop: Marian Figlio reported a very successful Hanukkah bazaar, we made lots of money. Thank you to students and congregants for purchasing from us.

Rabbi: Thank you all for making me and my family feel welcome. It was a nice feeling to look around the room yesterday during services and know everyone's names. I look forward to having coffee with members I haven't met. Julie and I feel settled, our kids are settled, and we have made some friends.

Services: Synagogues have their own High Holiday traditions for a new rabbi to learn, but things went very well thanks to the religious committee which did a lot of work to get everything ready, and to have congregants lead services is a wonderful bond. We held special services for Lone Soldier Shabbat in Oct. and Veteran's Day in Nov. Following the Pittsburgh shooting, ~300 members of the community came together in solidarity for a vigil service—thanks to Rabbi Goldstein and TBS for hosting the service. It was wonderful to see so many of you show up the following Shabbat in support of our community.

Special Events: In February, musician Billy Jonas will give concerts for adults and students and help lead services. Thanks to Judy Salob for helping to arrange that. In

March, representatives from ADL will come to talk about what they're doing to combat anti-Semitism. We're trying to have special programs every 1-2 months. Youth activities/Education: Rabbi Wohl loves working with our schools. We had a joyous Simchat Torah celebration. We had 130 people attend the Hanukkah party. We start religious school on Sundays with Havdalah. The preschool is getting great buzz, the families love it. Youth groups are doing great, thanks to Marin Weisblatt and Kate Penn. We had a beautiful Shabbat service at Kate and Mike Penn's house for the youth group families, with 50 people attending a pleasant evening of worship and community on a Friday evening. It is very encouraging to see our youth programming. We have a nice core of attendees for Torah and Talmud classes.

Community Involvement: Marian Figlio and Janice Krasnow have done an amazing job on Winter Relief, it's lots of work and a huge challenge, but it will be very rewarding for our congregation and is getting us more involved in the larger community. We are involved in a new social action group in Annapolis called AACT. Rabbi Wohl has talked to Adam Stone, Kate Penn and others about starting a formal social justice program in January after Winter Relief. There are so many things going on in the community that we can be involved in. Rabbi Wohl is working to continue getting Kol Shalom better known in the Annapolis community. He met Governor Hogan at the Governor's Hanukkah party; he was asked to give the invocation at County Executive Pittman's inauguration, and he lunched with Mayor Buckley on Thursday. The mayor wants to promote diversity. Rabbi Wohl reached out to the Anne Arundel County police chief—he, Mayor Buckley, and the Governor did not know that Kol Shalom existed, so it's important to talk to people and tell us who we are.

Rabbi Wohl is also passionate about Israel advocacy. We have a KS delegation going to the AIPAC conference in March. Anyone interested is welcome to join us.

Youth Groups: Kate Penn reported that with the influx of 5 middle schoolers new to Kadima this year, we now have a large group of 18 kids participating in Kadima. A large portion of our Kadima members are in 8th grade so they will move up to USY, which will give USY a big boost but Kate had been concerned about Kadima staying vibrant, so she is excited to see so much participation. We are trying to get more of a leadership component in USY in planning activities, reaching out to another group in Columbia for joint activities, since we currently only have 6-8 kids participating; we are encouraging them to solidify because next year we will have more kids. In addition to social activities, we are working on mitzvah projects—working with Sunrise Assisted Living, an animal shelter, and continuing to help with holiday programming.

We are a chapter of the regional Seaboard and national programs, we are boosting our numbers of kids participating in regional activities such as weekend retreats, summer camp, etc.

Rabbi Wohl and several congregants praised Kate for her dedicated work getting young families involved and creating a close-knit feeling among them.

Religious: Ben Weiner reported that things are going well. The HH went really well this year, we appreciate everyone being here on time and thank our volunteers and honorees. Sharon Kolstad added that for 3 of the past 4 weeks, we haven't had a minyan on Friday night due to people being away for the winter, etc. We don't want to make you feel guilty, but we encourage you to come if you can—we could use your boost!

Men's Club: The weekend of Feb. 2-3 is a full weekend. In addition to the Billy Jonas concerts, we have our Men's Club annual Superbowl event Feb. 3 at 6:30 PM. It's a fun, social event, good food. Thanks to Les Pisarz, as always, for the huge screen. The event is open to everyone, members and nonmembers alike.

House: Phil Itzkowitz reported that the house is still standing, no unusual issues. It's wet outside but dry inside!

Howard offered a special thank you to Phil, who spends an inordinate amount of time making sure our synagogue is in good repair.

Oneg/Kiddush Sponsor Program: Jamie Adkins reported that if she has missed anything, please email her. She apologizes then and now!

GAIN: Helaine Betnun reported that GAIN will have their interfaith service on New Year's Eve. Details forthcoming in the Shofar.

HH Advertising: Bill Katcef has no report at this time!

Women's League: Joyce Malech reported that we have had several wonderful events: the Welcome Back BBQ in August, co-sponsored by our schools and the Men's Club; a cooking event in Sept. with Janet Clarke; and a program with Annapolis historian Janice Hayes-William in Oct. which was so well-received we may do another event in Feb. for Black History Month. Last week we had our annual International Dinner at Julie & Gary Applebaum's house—in the future we will just call it "Potluck Supper." WL will provide dinner one night for Winter Relief. Our next board meeting is Jan. 13 at 10:30 AM. We encourage everyone to attend to help plan activities for this year and next.

Upcoming events: Jan. 27 book club at Susan Zevin's house, reading "Eternal Life" by Dara Horn. Watch for Mishloach Manot mailing in Feb. for Purim. Passover wine-tasting and sale Mar. 23—we are thinking of adding entertainment to encourage more participation. Final event of the year is WL Shabbat May 17-18.

Ziza Pallia accepts Torah Fund donations all year long. This year is the first of the next 100 years of Women's League, commemorated by a special Torah Fund pin when you make a donation.

Our membership drive for WL is still open, we welcome you to join.

DRRS: Sue Westenburger showed photos from the Simchat Torah celebration. Adults unscrolled the Torah all around the room, enveloping students in the middle. The Hanukkah dinner was awesome and well-attended. 2 weeks ago, we had young IDF soldiers talk with our students about what they do. Each month, our students work on different things. K-1 learned all the parts of the Torah, made their own Torahs and dressed them; 4th graders made Hanukkah decorations for their families; 4th-7th graders made fleece tie blankets for Winter Relief.

Good & Welfare: Hannette Goldberg offered condolences to Ted Becker's family and to the family of Philip Hazen, longtime friend of Kol Ami and Kol Shalom. He was not Jewish but came to services and studied Torah with the Rabbi. Howard added that Phil's wife, Ruth, passed away in April of this year. Phil & Ruth Hazen's foundation has helped our congregation financially 3-4 times a year.

Jennifer Foreman Clothier, the daughter of Cookie & Alan Foreman, was recognized as a Super Lawyer and Rising Star.

Good & Welfare is only as good as the information received by the G&W chairman, so please share happy news as well as any sympathies.

TOL Preschool: Allison Charapp reported that the preschool is flourishing, with 20 students. We get 4-5 inquiries a week, and there are 19 on the list already for next year and we haven't even opened enrollment yet. We are getting "buzz" around Annapolis because we offer such a great school and a beautiful religious experience. Jewish families are sliding in slowly; in some of these families, both parents are Jewish; but more of them are interfaith families wanting to re-connect, or they have a grandmother who was Jewish and they remember being with their cousins and want to re-connect. All our families embrace what we learn—even the non-Jewish

students are saying Modeh Ani and Sh'ma when they wake up. One child wears his kippah all day long. All the students made Hanukkiah's.

We are trying to reach out into our community and make sure we are active participants in KS. We continue our Challah fundraising, let Allison know if you want Challah. If you can't come in to pick up, she does a few drop-offs so let her know, she may be able to add more if needed. Also, some families from the religious school wanted to share Hanukkah with their regular day schools, so DRRS, TOL and WL pulled together 4 boxes of items for kids to share with their day school.

We hired Leslie Gluckman for an additional 6 hours a week to help us keep up with everything. Leslie used to be at KI preschool and is waiting to move to Nova Scotia, so she is able to help us in the meantime.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to build this program. Allison is grateful for the support of this amazing congregation is amazing and she loves her job!

Membership: Howard reported that Stan & Terry Feinblum moved to Florida and resigned their membership; we will keep them on the mailing list. Current membership is 138 families.

Potential Merger Committee: Sharon Kolstad reported that 1-1/2 years ago, we voted strongly to pursue the possibility of a merger, but weren't going to vote on a merger unless we knew what building we'd be merging to. This fall, we hired an architecture firm, Levin/Brown in Baltimore. Steve Sutton is our point of contact with architect Mark Levin. Many of you attended the meeting at Kneseth Israel on Oct. 28 to express what we want and need in a reconfigured congregation. We compiled those results and gave them to the architect, who gave us 3 scenarios: one for a modest-sized building of ~14,000 sq. ft.; one for a medium building of ~15,000 sq. ft., and one for a larger building up to 20,000 sq. ft. Questions have gone back and forth, and we are now waiting for more specific ideas from him. Meanwhile, we are working with 2 companies, one at KI on environmental safety concerns—they will come on Tuesday to take air samples (for mold, asbestos, etc.)—and another company to do a feasibility study for KS re: environmental concerns outside—how can we do parking, stormwater management, do we have to move the septic system, etc. if we are going to grow our building. That's where we are now; we expect that next time we get together it might be for the vote we've all been waiting for.

Sharon's report generated many questions. A brief summary, including points of clarification, are below:

Sharon clarified that the Oct. 28 meeting about wants/needs was not tied to a specific structure. We listed things such as needing a sanctuary that holds 300 people; table seating for events involving food, possibly with a dance floor; we need education space; bathroom space; etc. Then from those lists, the architect said we can do a small, medium or larger building, but not tied to any specific building. The questions back and forth with the architect were to determine do we really need X, how many bathrooms, etc. From that, the architect can make a design.

Howard clarified that if we merge, the merged congregation will be housed in one of the 2 buildings we have. There is no 3rd option of a new building—it will either be a revised KS or revised KI. The architect should be finished with his work by the end of January or early Feb.

A congregant expressed concern that since the Oct. 28 meeting, it seems like not as many KI members are attending services at KS, and wondered if KI gave any negative feedback from that meeting. Howard stated that the feedback he has received was mostly positive. Howard notices who has been attending our services, and has been disappointed that we get only 4-6 people from KI. He has spoken about it with friends from KI. One factor may be that some KI members do not want to come here, just as some KS members who don't want to go there; some of it may be due to our vote not to have joint HH services with KI.

KI is ~23,000 sq. ft.; KS is ~9,800 sq. ft. and can expand to ~12,500 sq. ft. The architect has been asked to reduce the scope to fit our footprint. When we get the design pieces from the architect, they will come with approximate cost. Then we will get official appraisals of our 2 buildings. Right now we only have “guesstimate” appraisals. We have just gone through a major renovation here which totaled \$1.2 million. Our building is probably worth roughly \$1 million, KI is probably worth roughly \$3 million. If we were to approve a merger with a decision to go to KI, the sale of our building would not be able to finance renovation at KI. Then the question will be: would our congregation be willing to undergo another major fundraising campaign? Sharon urged us not to have that conversation until we have more official information. In response to a congregant's questions about why our building is worth less than the cost of the recent expansion, Jeff Halpern explained that the actual construction cost was around \$700,000, with the additional cost going toward deferred maintenance items like roof repair, as well as furnishings and other start-up costs related to the preschool. Expansion projects like ours do not necessarily add appraisal value equal to the building cost; they add qualitative value to the congregation, such as bringing in young families.

There were requests from congregants to see the summary reports of the Oct. 28 subgroup meetings. The notes of each subgroup can be made available electronically but the architect has not made a summary report of those notes. We can post the 3 programs that the architect gave us. There was also a request for the congregation to receive a summary report of the assets and property value of each congregation.

Congregants had questions about why the 3rd option of a new building elsewhere was off the table. Jeff explained that years before our expansion project, we had other long-term planning committees which had looked at the cost of purchasing land and building a new facility. At that time, we had a prototype building of roughly 13,000 sq. ft. and looked at different pieces of land. Costs have only gone up since then. The cost was \$5-6 million. When we interviewed the 2 architecture firms for the current potential merger project, they agreed with that estimate and that the overall cost for a new building from scratch on a new piece of land was not viable.

We have not discussed razing one of our buildings and constructing new on our existing land.

In response to additional questions to clarify the architect's work thus far, Jeff explained that the Oct. 28 meeting was to "dream big" about what we'd like in a building. The architect translated the information from that meeting into 3 square footage options. Those are documented. The merger committee asked questions about those 3 reports. The architect is now working on designs that reflect the best fit for our 2 existing sites—looking at the maximum we can do here at KS and how that fits with what we asked for; and the same at KI. At this time, the committee is accepting the square footage programmatic material with questions and directed comments, but we haven't gotten back drawings. Once we get that from the architect, we have one opportunity to make changes, then we will get the final version, then we can vote.

Many thanks to Jeff Halpern for the countless number of pro bono work he has done on behalf of our committee and Kol Shalom.

Julia Peremel informed us of a letter in her possession indicating that Compass Rose Theater is in the process of trying to lease the Aleph Bet campus. She also has heard rumors that there are people interested in buying KI. The potential merger committee was unaware of these possible developments. Howard will speak to the leadership at KI to get more information.

Sharon reminded us that throughout this process, we knew that we may or may not agree to a merger. Even if we decide not to merge, some KI people will come here, so the plans in which we are investing may serve us in future, if we need to expand.

Kate Penn made a **motion** to revisit the 3rd option of a new building on existing KI or KS property, consisting of the optimal square footage and including all associated construction costs. Julia seconded the motion.

In discussing the motion, Kate stated that remediation is often more costly than building from scratch. Others expressed concern that revisiting this option will slow down the whole process. Jeff Halpern stated that it would take 3-4 months for a full evaluation and that if we started from scratch, we would be subject to current building codes requiring variances because we have too much impervious surface. Howard noted that we would have to go back to each congregation to ask for more money for the architect, since the fee was based on 2 designs, not 3.

There were continued questions about why the 3rd option was taken off the table in the first place. Howard responded that the decision was based on prohibitive cost and was within the purview of the potential merger committee, because both congregations were committing to share the \$30,000 fee for the architect, but that did not include some of the ancillary costs, so we were able to get 2 options from the architect plus have enough money for engineers, environmental concerns, etc.

The question was called. The congregation voted in favor of calling the question. The motion was re-read and a vote taken. The motion was defeated.

Old Business: none

New Business: Sharon Hopkins made a motion that the minutes from the congregational meeting be sent within 15 days of the meeting. Motion seconded by Linda Rosenberg. Janice Krasnow accepted this timeframe as reasonable. Motion carried.

Amy Bleich reminded us that she met with Officer Shiloh a long time ago and would still like us to have training on what to do in emergency situations such as an active shooter. Howard gave an update on security: at the Board meeting on Dec. 6, we met with former FBI agent Mitchell Stern who works with a cyber security company. He walked our campus and met with the Board, he said we are in very positive shape in terms of security. We have exit doors everywhere. Howard has contracted to get panic buttons and 2 additional cameras so we can see exactly who is at the front door. We are getting another extension to the mag lock so that during Saturday services, the door will be locked, and there will be a release by the bookshelves so that our greeter, usually Phil Itzkowitz, can open the door. Once all that is done, Howard agreed that we would be interested in having training, perhaps on a Sunday. He will be in touch with Amy.

Ron Peremel noted that our congregation does not have a vision statement. He requested that the potential merger committee create a vision statement (or 2 statements, depending on whether or not we merge), to lay out what we're trying to achieve for future generations in terms of growing, attracting unaffiliateds, our preschool and religious schools, programming, modernization of services.

Motion to adjourn carried. Meeting adjourned at 12:01 PM.