

REPORT ON TBC'S ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING



Dear TBC Family,

As you know, we had a very important Congregational Meeting on May 30 during which we discussed and voted on the future of TBC and how best to move toward greater engagement, vitality and sustainability. If you were unable to attend, this letter provides a summary of the meeting, including what the leadership team has been working on, our recommendations and how the congregation voted.

You can view the committee reports by clicking [here](#). You can view the approved budget by clicking [here](#). A

Thanks to all who participated in these planning efforts. With enthusiasm and optimism for a great 2023-2024,

President June Mara and Cantor Harriet Dunkerley

THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING IN BRIEF

After several years of budget deficits closed by a few generous families' donations, and having been unable to obtain new financing from the bank, the Finance Committee recommended selling our building and finding a new home for TBC.

Because of the centrality of our building to our congregational identity, Leadership decided to first review other options. After thoughtful reconsideration, the Board recommended a different action plan, one that involves committing ourselves to growing the membership significantly as well as implementing an aggressive 4-year campaign to raise \$1.5 to \$2 million.

The majority of families at the Congregational Meeting approved the plan and we have already begun implementation. One of our first steps has been to reduce Religious School fees by half, an approach that was recommended as a way to help attract and retain young families.

Leadership will do a better job of regularly communicating our milestones and progress to the congregation.

For this plan to succeed our members will need to be a more active part of the process by stepping up to volunteer, helping plan events and making more of an effort to attend them, and making a strong financial commitment to TBC's future.

Background

Over the past seven months, the Executive Committee and Board worked closely with the Finance Committee to figure out how we close a significant budget deficit and become sustainable. In recent years, our operating expenses have regularly exceeded income from membership dues and religious school tuition. We have been able to close those gaps as they occurred with generous gifts from a few congregant families. One major expense that contributes to our ongoing deficit is our building.

Aside from being a major expense, our building is also our most significant asset – both in terms of its physical beauty, the tranquility of the setting and its monetary value. The building and property are assessed at about \$3 to \$3.5 million dollars, and our remaining mortgage is just over \$500,000. With this in mind, the Finance Committee investigated whether we could refinance the mortgage and take out some of our equity. However, given our operating deficit, the bank would not agree to refinancing. We also considered a sale/leaseback – but that too was not financially feasible. We unsuccessfully looked at other sources for loans. Finally, in November, the Finance Committee recommended selling the building and finding a new home for TBC.

That said, many of us on the leadership team were not in favor of selling the building, and we continued to explore other options. We created various permutations of at least a dozen different models, consulted with the Union for Reform Judaism, attended countless webinars and consulted with some of our members.

Our TBC Action Plan

After months of looking at options from every imaginable angle, we presented an exciting new action plan at the Congregational Meeting, fully endorsed by the Board, and agreed to by the vast majority of the families present at the meeting on May 30. This new plan has the potential to grow our community and create incredible opportunities for TBC to be the center of Jewish life in our area.

We each join a synagogue for different reasons. And we each practice Judaism in different ways – some of us are more religious or spiritual; others are culturally Jewish and crave opportunities to make a difference in the world with other Jews; some join to provide themselves and their children with a Jewish education and learn Jewish values; still others want the opportunity to socialize with Jewish friends. Our plan for the future is to focus on retention and growth by learning from our members and prospective members where they fall on that spectrum and ensure that we provide services, opportunities and programming that meet their varied needs.

To help us do that, we are investigating hiring a full-time **Director of Engagement** in 2023-2024.

We are in the process of defining that person's role and scope. In general, however, responsibilities will include:

- Developing and implementing strategies that keep us abreast of best practices, including the developing practice of "[Relational Judaism](#);"
- Recruiting, motivating and honoring volunteers;
- Creating new initiatives to better connect members to each other, helping to identify prospective members and coordinating outreach in partnership with our Membership Committee;
- Ensuring that programming and events create meaningful opportunities for engagement, relationship building, education and Jewish inspiration; and
- Expanding our community and social media presence.

Our work on growth and retention has already begun and continues in earnest this summer as we meet with current and former members. We want to learn what drives each person's Jewish passions, what activities or events you would like to see and be willing to champion and participate in, and what connects you to our community.

Our calendar for the upcoming year already has more frequent and fun social events scheduled that are geared to our different constituencies, as well as unique Shabbat programming. Some examples include an interfaith Thanksgiving service, blessing of our beloved animals, an interfaith service day, an outdoor **"Burgers and Brew Shabbat,"** an adult costume party and a progressive dinner, to name a few. Our social action initiatives will continue to engage congregants in the important work of supporting and building a just society. We will be asking TBC members to step up and help inspire and create these kinds of events. Details will be shared in ongoing reports and emails.

We will be adding new programming to the Religious School, including a new **"Bagels and Blocks"** program for parents and children up to age 2, **"Junior Chai"** for our preschoolers, an antisemitism module for older students, and an adult Hebrew class – all to be rolled out in the fall.

We are investigating the barriers that prevent prospective families from joining our community and make adjustments as we can to help make that choice easier.

One such perceived barrier is religious school tuition, so we will be cutting religious school tuition in half effective immediately to help us attract and retain younger families with religious school age children. We will keep dues at their current level for next year other than an adjustment in the "Fair Share" level to \$5,000 per family which more accurately reflects the cost of running TBC of \$5,000 per family. We are also exploring introductory rates for new families and former members who choose to rejoin.

On the financial side, we have launched a significant 4-year fundraising effort. Our goal is to raise \$1.5 to \$2 million dollars over that time. While that may sound daunting, we already have initial pledges for 1/2 of our goal for 2023-2024, as well as a commitment for the entire four years that will partially match other donations – encouraging all of us to take part in this campaign to whatever extent we are able. Matching donations are a wonderful motivator! This "investment" in TBC's future will enable us to fix the roof in the Religious School wing and repair any damage inside as well, without incurring any additional debt.

We will actively seek to rent space in our building to provide additional income. One of our congregants has stepped up to champion this effort.

Leadership has made a commitment to regularly communicate our progress to the congregation.

What We Need You To Do

We look to each of you to make a commitment too. We ask that you share your ideas with us, volunteer your time and expertise, participate in events and financially invest in our future to whatever extent you are able.

TBC is your community. Its future is up to you.

**MAKE A DONATION NOW TO HELP SUPPORT
TBC'S FUTURE!**

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