



SINAI TEMPLE

# 2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT





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## **Annual Report: President's Report**

### **Submitted By: Michael Arnall, President**

As we continue to navigate the latter innings of this pandemic and move toward the endemic phase, I am happy to present this state of the synagogue with you, our Sinai Temple Community.

We are a community rich in history, culture, and inclusion. A synagogue, led by inspirational clergy, that teach and guide us through all of life's cycles. A day school and religious school that nurture our children to become ethical young adults and critical thinkers who can walk through life with confidence and humility. And memorial parks that aim to guide those in times of need, help families plan for the future, and support the Jewish community as well as other worthwhile causes.

At the close of FY20-21, we said 'so long' (not 'goodbye' – a word never used in my wife Sari's family) to our beloved Howard Lesner, and welcomed our new Executive Director, Jessica Green. Jessica has quickly earned the trust and respect of staff, clergy, lay leadership, and the community at large. I have been fortunate to witness, firsthand, her innate ability to translate vision into reality. Jessica has enmeshed herself in the day-to-day business of Sinai Temple with laser-like precision and continues to empower her staff to shift paradigms by creating and implementing innovative and forward-thinking strategies. We have started to forge a path forward to assist us in providing more value to our members and Jessica's leadership has been instrumental in guiding us through that process.

In July 2021, we opened the Sinai Temple Mental Health Center (STMHC). Generously funded by the Fredric D. Rosen and Nadine Schiff Family Foundation, STMHC is the vision of Rabbi Guzik and serves as a resource for congregants in need of emotional or psychological support or outside referrals. The Center offers support groups focusing on specific mental health and relationship issues, a comprehensive bereavement program, and general educational programming throughout the year. We are very thankful to the Rosen's for their continued generosity and for helping provide further support to our community.

The summer of 2021 was supposed to be a "return home". A time when we could see our family, our friends, our community, and be together for the High Holy Days. However, our best-laid plans became untenable as we saw a significant uptick in COVID-19 cases. Just as we planned for an exciting return to in person HHD services, we were forced to make last minute pivots and seek out the assistance of a number of our communal interfaith partners. Rabbis Guzik and Sherman

rallied our friends at the Church of the Good Shepherd and the Mormon Temple and “Yom Kippur: Under the Stars” was borne. Hundreds of families gathered at their baseball field (adjacent to the Mormon Temple) to daven Kol Nidre and Neilah and listen to the long and staccato sounds of the shofar. Due to the Rabbis’ leadership and imagination, our members were able to gather and pray together in ways we would have never thought possible. These interfaith relationships are directly responsible for some of our most exciting program successes over the course of this past year. The Purim carnival, Interfaith Prayer Service for Peace in Ukraine, our new Black Jewish Alliance, and Rise Against Hunger were all made possible because of the generosity of our friends, and I look forward to our continued partnership and collaboration for years to come.

Membership suffered a slight decline in FY2020-2021. Fortunately, many of our members returned in FY2021-2022. Our current membership units stand at 1675, including honoraria.

During the latter part of the year, we continued our charge of financial prudence. We identified the need for a purchasing manager to better control our spending, we separated SAA finances (from those of the Temple) in an effort to build trust and accountability, we reassessed our insurance coverage needs, and we adopted better accountability processes. All of these initiatives have resulted in financial savings for Sinai Temple and created the opportunity to offer improved benefits for our employees as well as our institution as a whole. I would like to personally thank our VP Finance, Dr. Leon Biederman, and our Insurance Committee Chair, Michael Akiva, for their leadership and diligence in addressing these issues during this past year.

During this fiscal year we decided that it was no longer possible to ignore some of our outstanding building improvements and deferred maintenance issues. Our VP Administration, Anna Tenenblatt, in collaboration with our Executive Director, guided the Board to approve the most urgent and pressing projects. I am glad to report that we started the process of updating all the perimeter security cameras and we will be upgrading the elevators in short order.

February 20, 2022, we celebrated Aryell Cohen, his legacy, and his 46 years of devotion to this community. It was a night filled with emotion, love, and beautiful music. It was the first night, since the pandemic began in the early spring of 2020, that the main sanctuary was full, honoring a person that Rabbi Wolpe refers to as, “the emotional heart of Sinai Temple.” In Aryell’s farewell video, he stated that when he enters the main sanctuary, he is consistently awestruck by its grandeur. Truth be told, this community has been graced with Aryell’s gifts of music these past five decades and we are the ones that have been filled with awe and amazement. We love you, Aryell, and we thank you!

As many of you know, Rabbi Wolpe announced his pending retirement on June 30, 2023. I feel so very privileged to have had the opportunity to consider Rabbi Wolpe my rabbi, my colleague, and my friend. As he mentioned, he will spend a year in Boston and will assume the role of Rabbi Emeritus beginning July 1, 2023. The board of directors, during 4Q2021, approved a succession plan whereby Rabbis Guzik and Sherman will assume the role(s) of Co-Senior Rabbi. This will be formally presented to the membership once the plan has been crystalized.

At the close of this fiscal year, we will say 'so long' to our current Head of School, Dr. Marc Lindner. Dr. Lindner has been an exceptional leader for our school, and we wish him much luck and success in his future endeavors. Succeeding Dr. Lindner will be Rabbi Andy Feig as Interim Head of School and Lisa Zide as Associate Head of School. We couldn't be happier with their elevation to these new roles, and I hope you will join me in wishing them a B'Hatzalah!

This spring (and early summer), we will continue to embark on some of the initiatives I mentioned previously. From more efficient membership modeling to eTicketing for the High Holy Days, we are leveraging different technologies in order to make the experience of membership at Sinai Temple pleasant and much more efficient. I continue to be excited about the prospects.

I'd like to personally acknowledge the Executive Committee for their tireless commitment to this institution and for their continued resolve. They have done Yeoman's work while maintaining full time careers and sacrificing time with their families. Jamie Berman, Dr. Leon Biederman, Anna Tenenblatt, Richard Weston, Sindy Paikal, Daniel Delshad, Laura Reader, Rob Galperson, Jimmy Taus, Rob Strauss, Rebecca Kekst, Eric Diamond, Shervin Rashti, and Mehrzad Roshan. It has been my honor collaborating with you this past year.

To our esteemed Clergy, it has been my extraordinary privilege to work alongside you building community and creating an environment that adheres to the value of B'tzelem Elohim, that each human being is made in the image of God and that we continue to honor the dignity of our richly diverse community, as illustrated in Sinai Temple's recently adopted Inclusion Statement. Thank you, Rabbis Wolpe, Guzik, Sherman, and Cantor Feldman.

... and Danielle Kassin, our resolute Religious School Director. Danielle spent the past year navigating a lot of emotions and still found a way to offer meaningful and enriching learning experiences to our religious school children and their families. Thank you! Thank you! Our community is truly fortunate.

Finally, thank you, Sinai Temple community, for your support as well as the love you have shown me, Sari, Jeremy, Rylan, and Avery. It has been my pleasure serving all of you this past year.

From strength to strength .....

L'Shalom  
Michael Arnall



## **Annual Report: Administration**

**Submitted By: Anna Tenenblatt, Vice President of Administration**

The activities overseen by the Vice President of Administration are as follows: \*

- Operations of Temple properties
- Temple Security
- Personnel and HR
- Board development and mentoring for new and current board members
- Catering

The committees in the portfolio include House & Grounds (and facilities), Art & Décor, Board Development, Catering, Personnel Policy and Security.

Due to Covid restrictions, the building was closed until late 2021. Most committees were not meeting or met very infrequently.

Board Development- Marci Maniker (chair) Jamie Berman, Jason Cosgrove, Kerry Maller, Sindy Paikal, Linda Camras, Leon Biederman, Janet Rosenblum, Anna Tenenblatt

House & Grounds- Anna Tenenblatt, Jessica Green, Sam Parsi, Leon Biederman (in formation)

Security- Anna Tenenblatt, Jessica Green, Tom Flesh, Rob Galperson, Jamie Berman, Lisa Zaid (SAA) (in formation)

Catering -TBD

Personnel Policy- Linda Camras and Frank Melton (co-chairs), Jamie Berman, Leon Biederman, Shirley Bilfield, Michael Bordy, Ira Friedman, Tom Lane, David Matloob, Peter Rothholz, Kurt Smalberg

\*Communication and Information Technology Committees have shifted to a new VP position.

It has been my pleasure to work with Sinai's new Executive Director, Jessica Green, this past year. She really hit the ground running and has tackled many projects and issues amazingly well.

Some notable accomplishments this year include:

- A California security grant secured by Development Director Mike Amerikaner for \$200,000. The funds will be used to modernize and expand exterior security cameras.
- A review of the fire panel and electrical panel installations.
- Reorganization of administrative personnel and their responsibilities.
- Ongoing security review for personnel needs and digital deep dive.
- Board development event for new board members scheduled for June.

As always, it has been my pleasure to work with Sinai clergy and staff.

Anna Tenenblatt



## **Annual Report: Development**

**Submitted By: Laura (Reader) Miller, Vice President Development**

"At times when people are most in need, when they're most vulnerable, the Sinai Temple community steps up and supports them."

Eric Diamond, Sinai Temple President, 2011-2013

Development at Sinai Temple continues to be strong, despite the ongoing Pandemic and other challenges. This year, new Director of Development Mike Amerikaner began oversight of our development strategies. He has introduced new ideas – such as highlighting our impact – and is collaborating with lay leadership to improve our development capabilities. Overall, Sinai Temple's members continue to generously support the synagogue during one of its most challenging eras.

### **Annual Appeal**

Like last year, the Annual Appeal continued to be affected by the ongoing Pandemic and it was decided just a few months prior that we would be welcoming members in-person. Therefore, our appeal strategy utilized tactics from last year, such as Text2Give, as well as new tactics, such as having four different pitch speakers in our four different Yom Kippur services. Our appeal's goal was to highlight how the Sinai Temple community came together to support each other during the Pandemic. We highlighted the story of Noah Houriani, who built a Torah table-top for his offsite Bar Mitzvah, and then shared it with other b'nai mitvah families. The Yom Kippur speakers – Eric Diamond, Noah Houriani, Laura (Reader) Miller, Sam Parsi, and Shervin Rashti shared what Sinai Temple mean to them and their families.

The result was, although Yom Kippur attendance was low, we raised \$1,325,606 from 508 unique donors. While less people gave to Sinai Temple, the average gift size increased to \$2,610. A quickly planned outdoor service raised \$32,488, and our non-resident members continued to support Sinai Temple.

### **Annual Appeal by Membership-Type**

- Ziegler Sanctuary: \$1,048,086
- Unreserved (Family Minyan & Torah in the Round): \$140,847
- Non-Members: \$84,145
- Barad Hall: \$52,528



### **First Time Donors**

This year 119 donors made their first donation to Sinai Temple, for a total of \$34,02 and a \$286 average gift. Of those donors, 34 made them during the Annual Appeal (\$7,831 and \$230 average gift). Other gifts were made to various funds, such as the General Fund. First time gifts can indicate that our mission and appeal is resonating with new donors. These new donors are now much more likely to become repeat givers.

### **Grants**

Grants are a vital part of any nonprofit's development portfolio, and this year we were very successful in applying to and being awarded grants, totaling over \$300,000. The largest grant awarded was \$200,000 for a State of California Office of Emergency Service grant to upgrade and improve our security systems. This grant will fund a complete overhaul of Sinai Temple's security camera network. The second largest grant Sinai Temple was awarded this year was from the Los Angeles Jewish Community Foundation: \$50,000 for the Sinai Temple Mental Health Center. This grant is being used to underwrite mental health services and programs for all Sinai Temple staff. Beit Bracha, overseen by Rabbi Nicole Guzik, once again was awarded a \$25,000 grant from the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles. Beit Bracha continues to be one of our most important communal services. The Paul Singer Foundation awarded ATID a \$25,000 grant to fund Israel-focused dinners. Finally, Israel Through The Senses program was awarded a \$1,250 grant from Jewish National Fund and Nefesh B'Nefesh.

### **Special Events**

As Sinai Temple continues to bounce back from the Pandemic, we are bringing back special events that support our fundraising efforts. In February, Sinai Temple hosted a farewell concert for Aryell Cohen, our longtime organist. Thanks to the efforts of Cantor Feldman and the committee, the concert raised \$58,075 to our Music Fund. In March, we hosted our first Purim Carnival since 2019, which was organized by Rebeka Small and Danielle Kassin. It was a tremendous success, with thousands in attendance. The carnival raised \$35,560 from ticket and food sales, including \$9,400 in sponsorships. Our postponed Sinai Temple Gala for Jamie and Joel Berman is scheduled for June 12, 2022. The gala for Howard Lesner, also postponed by the pandemic, is being rescheduled TBA 2023.

### **Major Donors (10k+)**

Sinai Temple is fortunate to have generous supporters who can make major gifts. This year is no exception, and these donors continued to support Sinai Temple at a crucial time. As of this report, there were 62 major gifts totaling \$1,348,823. These gifts went to a variety of funds including the Annual Appeal, Clergy Discretionary Funds, and Programs such as the Ted (z"l) & Hedy (z"l) Orden and Family Friday Night Live, and the Sinai Temple Mental Health Center underwritten by the Fredric D. Rosen and Nadine Schiff-Rosen Family Foundation.

### **Summary**

Like most religious institutions and other nonprofit organizations, 2021-2022 proved to be a challenging year as the Pandemic continued. Economic uncertainty and financial hardship

limited many from making more sizeable donations, if any all. Sinai Temple's Annual Appeal, for example, saw less donors give than in years past. However, those that did give generously gave more than last year. In total, Sinai Temple has so far raised \$2,200,933 in both unrestricted and restricted donations. Unrestricted donations totaled \$1,336,420 and restricted donations totaled \$864,513. While we anticipate giving trends to continue in a positive trajectory in 2022-2023, there are a few uncertain factors that may impact next year's development. For example, like most synagogues, Sinai Temple may continue to see a decline in membership. If that were to happen, it is likely we will see another year where there are less donors than the prior year. But if Sinai Temple's donors continue to generously increase their annual contributions, then we will likely continue to reach our fundraising goals.

(All financial data as of April 1, 2022).



## **Annual Report: Education**

**Submitted By: Rob Galperson, Vice President of Education**

As a current parent of two Sinai Akiba Academy students as well as being an alumn of the Sinai Temple Religious school, I have appreciated the value and importance of providing a Jewish Education for our children. We are fortunate as a synagogue to be able to offer outstanding curriculums in both of our Sinai Akiba Day School and Sinai Temple Religious School, a testament to our amazing teachers and administrators in both our schools.

In addition to our schools, our Beit Bracha Program enables every child with special needs or learning differences to have a Bar/Bat Mitzvah and a Jewish education. We thank Rabbi Nicole Guzik for her continued leadership in making this rite of passage accessible. Our Teen Center serves as a vehicle to continue your Jewish discovery post B’Nai Mitzvah through High School and our wildly popular Atid program continues to be the premier Jewish Young Professional group in Los Angeles.

Over the next few pages, you will find the detailed reports for each of these portfolios but first, I want to acknowledge the following individuals for their tireless commitment to making all this happen.

Danielle Kassin has been our Sinai Temple Religious Director for nearly two decades. Her enthusiasm for her students is why the religious school offers the highest level of Jewish Education through dynamic and inspirational programs. Danielle and her team were an instrumental part of the return of the Purim Carnival this year, which was a much-needed opportunity for the community to come together in a safe and outdoor setting. I know that Danielle will continue to have success in her role for many years to come and we are thankful for her leadership.

Briana Benaron is the driving force of our Atid Program. She has continued to build an energetic and welcoming community that provides social, professional, and spiritual growth at Sinai Temple and beyond. Briana has been able to provide engaging programs both virtually and now back in person as well. We are thankful for her passion and dedication to Atid.

Over at Sinai Akiba Academy we welcomed Lauren Dolinka as our new Lower School Director this year. Lauren hit the ground running and has proven she is deeply committed to following

our mission of engaging students in the joy and discipline of learning. Already in her first year we have seen many new exciting and engaging programs in our lower school and are excited to see what comes next. Sarah Klinger assumed the role of our Douglas Family Early Childhood Center Director in addition to her responsibility as the Elaine and Gerald Wolpe Parenting Center Director. Her kindness and thoughtfulness towards our youngest students are valued by all that know her. I also would like to acknowledge Irit Eliyahu, who continues to ensure our Judaic Studies curriculum thrives each year.

A very special thank you to Dr. Marc Lindner, our Sinai Akiba Head of School, who will be leaving us come June 30<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Lindner began his term during very unusual circumstances, when the entire school was undergoing remote learning. He navigated the trials and tribulations of the pandemic, while ensuring our children continued to receive a top-notch education. As we were able to return to campus Dr. Lindner ensured there were opportunities for the community to reconnect again. We thank you for your leadership during these past two difficult years. Our gratitude to Geoff Agnor, our outgoing Middle School Director for his commitment over the past several years to our older students. Geoff instantly became a favorite among the middle schoolers and many lower school students too. We wish both Marc and Geoff wonderful success in their next endeavors and know they will always be a part of our SAA Family.

The SAA community is beyond excited that Rabbi Andy Feig will be our Sinai Akiba Academy Interim Head of School effective July 1st, Rabbi Feig has been a constant and much-loved figure in our community for the past 14 years and is committed to continuing and growing our academic excellence. Congratulations also go out to Lisa Zide our new Sinai Akiba Academy Associate Head of School effective July 1<sup>st</sup>. For close to a decade, Lisa has been our Director of Admission and Enrollment Management and an enthusiastic champion for our school. I am also incredibly pleased that Betty Winn, our former Interim Head of School will serve as Senior Advisor to the Administration and the School Board for the remainder of this school year, and next year. Betty will provide strategic guidance to the senior administration and the School Board. We look forward to collaborating with Rabbi Feig, Lisa, and Betty.

I also would like to recognize and express our heartfelt gratitude to my friend and colleague, Rebecca Kekst as she concludes her tenure as Sinai Akiba Academy Board Chair. Rebecca has served countless roles at our school over the past twenty years and her tireless dedication during the past three years as board chair is an inspiration to all of us parents and lay leaders. Thank you, Rebecca, for your commitment and leadership.

As parents and grandparents, we carry a responsibility to ensure we provide our children and grandchildren with an outstanding Jewish Education, let alone recognizing the importance of belonging to a vibrant synagogue community to ensure the continuity of the Jewish people will last from generation to generation. Our education portfolio encompasses the importance of this duty. My appreciation goes to my dear friend and synagogue president, Michael Arnall for this amazing leadership opportunity.



## **Annual Report: Beit Bracha**

### **Submitted By: Rabbi Nicole Guzik**

Beit Bracha is our educational program at Sinai Temple that serves our students with special needs. At its onset, Beit Bracha invited children with special needs and learning differences to meet with a teacher, segregated from the greater religious school student population. At the end of its second year, our parents and students requested a more mainstreamed approach, fully integrating our students with special needs and learning differences within our religious school. Now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year, the goal of Beit Bracha is for our students to have a positive Jewish educational experience and feel engrained within the fabric of the Sinai Temple community. Our students are paired with aides, methodically matched by our director, Blair Lebovitz and mainstreamed into the classroom, chapel for tefillot, community holiday programming and synagogue wide Shabbatot and events. Beit Bracha is supported by the Los Angeles Jewish Federation, Looking Beyond Next Generation, Sisterhood, Men's Club and private donors.

Additionally, Beit Bracha customizes bnai mitzvah experiences and services for our students with special needs. This past year, Beit Bracha began a formal relationship with Sinai Akiba Academy and was able to support one student with learning differences. While an informal relationship with SAA has been in formation, this is the first year Beit Bracha has played an integral role in assisting a student be more integrated in the classroom, thus cultivating a positive Jewish educational experience. This year, we served 10 families with children with special needs and offered one bar mitzvah experience. One student attended our Religious School Shabbaton with the assistance of an aide through Beit Bracha.

Next year, the goal is to provide Beit Bracha 2.0: a post bnai mitzvah educational and social experience for young adults ages 13+. This is a necessary step to continue offering inclusive space for our population with special needs and learning differences. Our Beit Bracha team looks forward to this next point in the journey at Sinai Temple.



## **Annual Report: Mental Health & Reimagine**

**Submitted By:**

**Carolyn Hoffman, LCSW - Director, Sinai Temple Mental Health Center  
and Rabbi Nicole Guzik**

**SINAI TEMPLE MENTAL HEALTH CENTER**

With gratitude to the Fredric Rosen and Nadine Schiff-Rosen Family Foundation  
and  
Jewish Community Foundation REIMAGINE grant

### **STAFF SUPPORT and MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES: July 2021 – July 2022**

1. August 13, 2021

Informal Lunchtime Gathering for Sinai Temple (ST) Staff to address stresses related to returning to work after 1 1/2 years of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

15 participants

All participants had an opportunity to share personal experiences, concerns and hopes. Many lost loved ones and were able to receive support from colleagues. Participants shared concerns about sending children back to school, frustrations with others who have different comfort levels with risk prevention, coping with chronic anxiety. Many shared "silver lining" of enjoying extended time with family and time for personal reflection/growth. Participants shared coping strategies and hope that there will be an adjustment to a "new normal" post-pandemic.

*"I felt so relieved knowing I am not the only one that was having issues. I didn't share my thoughts as I got them off my chest, thanks to you, but every single thing that was touched upon, resonated with me completely and was so glad that all shared so much, so freely. I would definitely attend future meetings.*

*Thanks Carolyn!"*

*"Hi Carolyn,*

*Thank you very much for hosting this meeting around Covid re-entry. I would definitely be open to future meetings around this topic. It was nice to hear from other colleagues some of whom are experiencing similar things. Thank you for giving us this space and opportunity. It is so appreciated."*

## 2. August 20, 2021

Presentation/Group Facilitation on Personal Self Care at the Sinai Akiba Academy (SAA) Faculty Orientation Retreat at Brandeis-Bardin Camp Institute

30 participants

Offered in collaboration with the SAA student counseling/clinical staff

Participants introduced themselves with one word about how they are experiencing themselves in this moment of time. Journals and pens handed out and participants had time to respond quietly and privately to writing prompts centered on the Jewish new year: what they want to retain, and what they want to change from last year. Group was gathered for sharing and discussion, much of which centered on experiences during the COVID-19 lockdown. Participants experienced the support of their peers and relief at the opportunity to be heard as individuals, not just as teachers. Session ended with a guided meditation on compassionate mindfulness.

## 3. August 27, 2021

Upon request of SAA administration based on participant feedback, a follow up self-care session was held at lunchtime for SAA faculty.

Offered in collaboration with the SAA student counseling/clinical staff

5 participants

## 4. September 2, 2021

Rosh Hashanah Celebration for all Staff of ST and SAA

Over 50 participants

All staff members, including maintenance and security personnel, were invited to relax with a specialty coffee, novelty cookies, and assorted snacks. Gift bags were distributed with a positivity journal, pen, candies, and a scented candle.

*"Carolyn,*

*I wanted to thank you again for yesterday's Rosh Hashanah mini celebration and mental health break! Your thoughtfulness and effort into this event did not go unnoticed! I am sure you can sense the tension and stress during this time of year – it was beyond wonderful to take 10 minutes, connect with our co-workers and drink some delicious coffee. This gesture went a long way yesterday! Thank you for thinking of us in this capacity!"*

## 5. September 24, 2021

Informal Staff lunch gathering in the ST Sukkah

Participants were engaged with a creative journaling exercise, both for the immediate experience and as a coping tool. Group discussed the impact of the exercise, all felt emotionally calmer and more centered. Session ended with a guided meditation.

## 6. October 18, 2021

A Special Relaxation Experience with Chaplain Bonnie Leopold, Tibetan Singing Bowls

12 Participants

Participants were invited to lay on blankets and mats for guided Jewish meditation with the sound healing accompaniment of quartz crystal and Tibetan singing bowls.

*I REALLY ENJOYED THE PROGRAM; HOWEVER, I FELL ASLEEP. TELL HER DONT CHANGE A THING.  
(smile)*

*Thank you so much for selecting a very relaying day. I am excited to see what you have in store  
for the staff in the future.*

7. November 10, 2021

Informal Staff Lunch gathering, Presentation with Lauren Naaman, Registered Dietitian and  
Temple Member, on the Importance of Nutritional choices on Mental Health

Approximately 10 participants

8. November 30, 2021

Sinai Temple Staff Channukah Celebration, invitation extended to SAA Administration

Approximately 50 participants for in-person Comedy Performance

Coffee Cart, Channukah Gelt, Jelly donuts and other gifts for Sinai Temple Staff

Because of COVID protocols and an abundance of caution, this comedy show substituted for  
the traditional festive lunch. The show was a surprise for staff. The hour included an  
opportunity to connect briefly with other staff members “to get to know each other better” as  
friends and colleagues. Feedback shows that staff really appreciated this activity and hope for  
more chances for real connection in the future.

*I laughed! Thank you for that much needed levity. What a special treat. Thank you for putting  
this together and bringing joy to our staff.*

9. January 26, 2022

Gourmet Coffee Cart

10. February 2, 2022

Informal Staff Lunchtime gathering, Presentation with Richie Bencivenga, Certified Trainer, on  
the impact of physical activity and exercise on mental health and functioning. Included relevant  
science, personal questions, and practice of stretches and posture correction exercises needed  
after sitting at a desk for extended periods of time.

15 participants

Richie offered reduced rate for 1-hour introductory private training sessions for staff members  
to be covered by Mental Health Center.

2 participants

11. March 16, 2022

Informal Staff Lunchtime gathering, Presentation with Paul Owens, the “original dog  
whisperer,” and Sarah Gray on “How Dogs Make us Happier, Healthier Humans.” Included  
opportunity to engage with dogs and ask personal questions. Snacks for Staff provided.



In response to evaluation sent to staff regarding their overall experience of targeted mental health programming, the **following experiences will be planned and offered through August 2022:**

12. An opportunity to engage in an Art Project for emotional expression and stress reduction; with Anna August, Art Teacher with Sinai Akiba Academy, currently scheduled for April 26, 2022.
13. Additional informal discussions on mental health-related topics
14. Informal Staff Lunchtime Walks, First Scheduled for Tuesday, April 12
15. Staff Wellness Challenge, Staff members engaged in keeping personal record of health-promoting behaviors including attention to Physical and Mental Wellness with prize incentives
16. End of Year Off-site Staff Appreciation/Celebration, currently scheduled for June 17, 2022

**A Final Comment from an appreciative Staff member:**

***THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU!***

***I've never worked in a place that prioritized mental health. You are doing a beautiful job.***



## **Annual Report: Sinai Akiba Academy**

**Submitted By: Dr. Marc Lindner, SAA Head of School  
and Rebecca Kekst, SAA Board Chair**

SAA Committee members: Sari Arnall, Samantha Auerbach, Michael Arnall, Sheila Bolour, Linda Camras, Mayrav Gaslin, Liraz Hirari, Sharon Meron, Mayer Nazarian, Hezy Shalev, Brad Smeidt, Richard Weston, Elian Ohebshalom, Sarah Kamrava, Mehrnaz Javid, Reuben Berman

### **Emerging from COVID-19**

When the budget was planned for the 21-22 school year, much uncertainty remained about COVID-19 and how it might impact class structures and enrollment. The budget was built on the assumption that class structures would not be limited due to COVID-19, as they were in the 20-21 school year. Thankfully, our assumption was correct, and we were able to open school with the full student body attending each day.

While the full student body has been at school throughout the current year, until recently, there were remaining restrictions. Namely, parents were not allowed on campus, we did not have after-school programming, and we were not offering after care. However, in recent weeks (this is being written on 4/8/22), we have opened the campus to parents for a variety of programs and they are entering the building during drop off and pick up times. A sample of the programs that are now occurring in person are:

- Mini Minyan is back! The excitement among parents, students, and faculty is palpable each time!
- ECC Shabbat Celebrations have begun, and parents and students are joyous.
- The CHOICES after school program has begun. Offerings include Young Ninjas, Professor Egghead Science Inventors, Live Animal Invasion, Nature Watch Craft and Cubelets Robocoding, LEGO Engineering, Captain Kicks Soccer, Drone Flight Academy, and Chess.
- Mizmor Shir for several lower school grades.
- Model Sederim for Pesach.
- Publishing celebrations/showcases for several lower grades.
- A very successful and long-awaited Book Fair in Gold Hall.
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade is going on their trip to Camp Ramah, the 7<sup>th</sup> grade is going to Washington DC, and the 8<sup>th</sup> grade is going to Israel!

## Leadership Transitions

In the fall, Dr. Lindner announced that he will conclude his tenure as Head of School at the end of the current school year. Rabbi Andy Feig was named Associate Head of School as of January, and he will become Interim Head of School as of July 1. Concurrently, it was announced that Lisa Zide will become Associate Head of School as of July 1. Rabbi Feig and Lisa are fully engaged in planning for the coming school year, with an eye toward growing our overall program and leading it to new heights. A search committee for a permanent Head of School is being formed.

Geoff Agnor announced that he accepted a role as Assistant Head of School at the Willows School in Los Angeles. A search is underway for a new Middle School Director.

## Admissions

The Admissions Department works a year in advance to enroll students. It is incredible to look back and recall that one year ago we had not toured any prospects on campus, and all interviews and student assessments were conducted virtually.

Our Community Engagement Committee and Parent Association are providing diverse opportunities for families to connect through grade and community-wide events. In recent months, we have held our first in-person book fair in over two years and have begun to plan for May 2022 Night at the Pier, one of our community's biggest and most popular events of the year. We can't wait!

Our parent body continues to serve as ultimate ambassadors for SAA. In an educational landscape with so many choices, we are poised as a rigorous, academically focused school, rooted in Jewish values and enhanced by a focus on innovation and J-STEAM. We have so much to offer families, and we look forward to welcoming new community members this fall.

We are proud of our healthy enrollment in 2021-22, despite our ever-changing protocols due to COVID-19. As a result, we are pleased to share the following success of the 2021-22 enrollment year:

- **56** of our current parents are alumni, a record!
- **139** new students joined our school
- **90%** of our 8th graders got into their first choice High School in the last 5 years
- 8th graders went to **11** high schools across Los Angeles
  - 5 Top Secular Independent; 4 Jewish; 2 Public
- Enrollment increased by **21%**
- Enrollment exceeded our goal by **6.7%**
- Increased number of families to **373**

As we settle into a “new normal” post-COVID-19, we are excited about what is to come at SAA!

## Development

Despite many challenges, we have had several significant gifts made to the school through different major gifts and we anticipate surpassing our fundraising projections. As of 4/7/22, approximately \$700,000 was raised and we project that we will be close to \$800,000 before June 30th. This will exceed our budgeted projection which was \$734,926. Details are:

- Sinai Akiba Fund - \$350,326 (our budget goal was \$350,000, and there's still time to raise more.)
- Endowment Donations - \$55,500 (not projected since it is not Operating Income.)
- Major Gifts for 21-22 School Year - \$180,000 has been raised in major gifts, and we had projected \$70,000 in our Budget projections. This will help to make up a significant amount of the \$125,000 we had hoped to net for the 2021-22 Annual Event which we did not hold this year due to COVID. Gifts were made in support of our Israel Trip, Innovation Lab and Orchestra and a \$50,000 gift yet to be designated.
- Grants (TA, BJE, Federation & Milken) - \$116,633 YTD (with an additional \$43,000 expected from the Federation, \$11,438 from the BJE for Lainer/Generations yearly grant and \$8,400 from the Milken Family Foundation. This will bring this number up and these figures were in our original projections.
- SM Night at the Pier ~ \$57,000 in Sponsorships raised so far and another \$16,000 in ticket sales. The Event runs approximately \$100,000 and we hope to exceed our goal with additional funds raised in support of Sinai Akiba. Everyone is very excited, and our Parents Association is delighted to bring this event back after a two year hiatus. Our students love this special evening, and it is great to have something in the works that will bring our community together.



## **Annual Report: Sinai Temple Religious School**

**Submitted By: Danielle Kassin, Religious School Principal**

### **Committee Members**

1. **Parent Chairs:** Rebecca Houriani and Ashley Waterman
2. **Chesed Chair:** Nina Nattiv
3. **Staff Breakfast Coordinator:** Ella Omid
4. **Pizza Volunteer Coordinator:** Neda Rahimi
5. **Room Parents:** Yoshina Behnam, Candice Daneshvar, Aida Arasteh, Candis Melamed, Nina Nattiv, Nastaran Younessi, Karen Maghen, Camellia Sabzerou, Rachel Hakakzadeh, Elizabeth Ebrahimian and Rona Benyamini
6. **Shabbaton Committee:** Jinous Cohen, Bitu Shirazi, Sherli Pairavi, Rebecca Houriani, Ramona Shamoolian, Davina Penhaskashi, Azita Simanian, Camellia Sabzerou and Azadeh Lavi

### **Points to Kvell About:**

1. Over 300 Religious School family members gathered together in Santa Monica for "Tashlich at the Beach," where they enjoyed live music, teacher-led learning and partaking in the Tashlich ceremony
2. First day at school/Kick-off event: 200+ parents attended a welcome event with a coffee cart, breakfast and heard from our Religious School Director, Mental Health Director, and clergy.
3. Special Hebrew Zoom Sundays (in addition to live school days).
4. Hosted 3 retreats at Camp Ramah (Family Shabbaton, 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Retreat and Teen Retreat – the largest cohort we have ever taken!)
5. Special grade-specific parties (with one highlight being the puppies/prayer/pizza party)
6. Heightened excitement and increase in Student Hebrew Dog Tags!
7. Purim Carnival in an outdoor venue with over 800 people in attendance! Brought the community together and we raised money for Sinai!
8. Israel Club with our Shinshinit from Israel. Israel Club is an after-school club with Israeli dancing and Hebrew Learning for all grade levels.
9. Increased Parent Community Building (wellness days that included Yoga, Parent Walk & Talk, Meditation, etc.)
10. Danielle and a few other people cut hair during T'fillot and donated it to Hair with a Cause.

### **Mitzvah Opportunities (So that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is focused on the “Mitzvah” for our 6<sup>th</sup> grade classes & their families)**

- Our 6<sup>th</sup> Grade students were given three opportunities to complete their Mitzvah Projects
  - Chrysalis
  - Lange Foundation
  - Shemesh Farms
- 98% of students participated and wrote reports – more participation than any other year.

### **Additional Programming (yes! Lots of great things going on!)**

- Family Shabbat Services and Dinners for 3<sup>rd</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> grade
- Monthly STARS Shabbat Services with themes, students leading prayers, and providing opportunities for our students to practice reading from the Torah
- Grade-Specific Family Havdallahs
- Hebrew Spelling Bee
- Israel All-School Talent Show
- Kiddush and Hatikvah Challenge for students to learn even outside of school hours
- New elective classes for 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> graders
- Torah Unroll and Carnival for all Religious School families
- Raised money and helped run Sinai Basketball Camp!

### **Grade-Specific Programming**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Grade
  - Students created their own mini-shuls and shared them with their classmates, teachers, parents and even came on Shabbat morning to display to the entire Sinai Community.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade
  - Learned about the Shuk in Israel; and then created and ran their own Shuk with students and parents as their “customers”. They learned the Hebrew words for many of the items in the Shuk and raised almost \$300 for a charity in Israel!
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade
  - For the first time did a siddur project, learning about the prayers in the siddur and the connections with their grandparents and our ancestors.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Grade
  - Created and prepared Shabbat dinner for their parents.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Grade
  - Kabbalat Shabbat and Seder bootcamp (pre seder)!
- 7<sup>th</sup> Grade
  - Israel History – with Israel link curriculum and Holocaust studies dual curriculum

### **Challenges of 2021/2022 include:**

1. Covid Testing created enormous amount of administrative work.

2. Families were upset about mask wearing or and other families were upset about the lack of mask wearing.
3. Not knowing about what ages would need to be vaxxed to go to school. The anger and frustration around this took a lot of time and care and many hours of listening to frustrated parents.
4. Difficult to project /predict budget, hiring staff and guide families for upcoming school year.
5. Being short staffed; not having a Rabbi assigned to religious school has impacted us greatly.
6. There were positions unfulfilled within the temple that impacted the day-to-day administrative operations of our office (i.e.: Human Resources, Membership team, Technology Director, Mail/Copy Staff, et.)
7. In addition, our office assumed more responsibilities in relation to finance and membership.
8. Planning for a year continued of unknowns.

We are proud of all the accomplishments and successes we have been able to achieve during this unprecedented year.

**Metrics:**

We have a total of 301 students. We had 72 new students and 18 completely new families to the temple.

**Goals**

1. To continue to find ways to be in touch with individual families on a regular basis.
2. To continue to provide tutoring and individual support for students to enhance their Hebrew skills
3. To continue to reflect on our curriculum and creating ways to be relevant to our community and our students
4. To give support to our teachers to retain them.
5. To keep our families connected with Sinai Temple so that they continue to see the value in sending their kids and being a part of Sinai Temple.
6. Due to a generous gift from the Wachtels, we already secured a Shinshinit to support and enhance our Israel education in the Religious School and at Sinai for the coming school year.
7. Continue to rebuild our community to be even stronger and more connected than before.



## **Annual Report: Finance**

**Submitted By: Leon Biederman, Vice President of Finance**  
**Sinai Temple's Finances as of June 30, 2021**

The following highlights are from the audited financial statements of Sinai Temple as of June 30, 2021. All Sinai Temple numbers include the combined results from our three main divisions: Sinai Temple ("ST"), Sinai Akiba Academy ("SAA") and Mt. Sinai Memorial Parks and Mortuaries ("MSMP") unless specified otherwise. Additionally, we have included results from our compiled (unaudited) financial statements as of December 31, 2021. All dollars are rounded to the nearest thousand.

- The Net Assets of Sinai Temple increased \$20,229,858 or 19% as of June 30, 2021 from the previous year.
- The Total Revenues of Sinai Temple, including MSMP, were \$47,666,338 as of June 30, 2021, which represented a 2% decrease over the previous year. Of the Total Revenues, ST contributed 20%, SAA contributed 23%, and MSMP contributed 56% (1% listed as "With donor restrictions" division not specified).
- Membership dues and related charges made up approximately \$4,925,144 or 51% of the Total Revenues of Sinai Temple, excluding SAA and MSMP, as of June 30, 2021.
- Contributions totaled approximately \$3,895,720 or 40% of the Total Revenues of Sinai Temple, excluding SAA and MSMP, as of June 30, 2021. This is up from 39% of Total Revenues from the previous year.
- Special Programs, special events and other income, made up approximately \$873,599 or 9% of the Total Revenues of Sinai Temple, excluding SAA and MSMP, as of June 30, 2021.
- Salaries, benefits and related expenses comprise approximately \$5,253,546 or 52% of the Total Expenses of Sinai Temple, excluding SAA and MSMP.
- There was a cash surplus of \$4,468,358 (Temple Main Operating Bank) as of June 30, 2021.
- Sinai Temple has an unsecured revolving line of credit from a commercial bank that has a zero balance as of June 30, 2021.
- In October 2013, Sinai Temple obtained a loan of \$1,350,000 to fund the ECC Remodel Project. The Temple also opened a line of credit to cover the monthly interest expense on this loan. As of June 30, 2021, the loan balances of these lines of credit is zero.



- Sinai Temple obtained a loan from a private foundation for purchase and installation of the Yahrzeit Boards located in the main sanctuary. The balance owed as of June 30, 2021 was \$105,001. Quarterly principal and interest payments are based on the number of plaques sold in each quarter.

Thank you to Kay Mauren, Director of Finance, and the entire staff of the Finance Department for their outstanding efforts in preparing and maintaining the financial records of Sinai Temple.



## **Annual Report: Social Action and Programming**

**Submitted By: Sindy Paikal, Vice President of Social Action and Programs**

Social Action Committee, Michelle Taus, Chair

Members: Niki Cohanin, Marilyn Stern, Dana Schmidt, Anna Tenenblatt, Sindy Paikal, Nikki Sieger, Rabbi Andy Feig, Rabbi Erez Sherman and Rabbi Nicole Guzik.

This committee is responsible for coordinating and implementing temple-wide social action events. As in years past, we have concentrated on Packing with Purpose. We've merged that event and taken it to the Church of the Good Shepherd where in addition to packing kits, we help wash, cut and bag fruits for the homeless. This has been a monthly event that allows us to work together with our interfaith neighbors and bring our kits to the homeless population in our city.

SAC also worked with ATID and coordinated a PWP for the UCLA Food Closet at an Ted (z"l) & Hedy (z"l) Orden and Family Friday Night Live and a PWP and the Jewish Black Alliance program. We will also be putting together baskets for the mothers of KEEN children for Mother's Day.

Our upcoming project is working to reopen our gym to KEEN one Sunday a month as was done before covid.

### **Music Committee**

Chair - Jane Z.Cohen

Members - Malcolm Cosgrove, Caroline Delijani, Judy Fischer, Tom Flesh, Susan Lopez Giss, Harry Green, Carole Greenberg, Sheila Liebovic, Milo Mandel, Ken Nussen, Jina Rezvanpour, Rosa Berman Ruder, Linda Camras, Irwin Tenenbaum, Jerry Janoff, Sharon Jacobson, David Lefkowitz, Lina Ahdoot, Hallie Lerman, Gerry Turbow, Celine Emein

This committee is responsible for working with the Cantor regarding the music program and ideas for enhancing the program. Additionally, this year the committee is working on finding a new music director.

### **Program Committee**

The Temple Programming is put together by the programming team, Israel Center and Membership. Rebeka Small and Rabbis Guzik and Sherman have been organizing and running

the programs. As the challenges of COVID continued earlier this year, there was a mix of events on zoom and in person. A few highlights from this year were the following:

- Rabbi Sherman presented a dialogue with Major Isaac Greenberg of the US Army Reserves called Saving Lives: A Jewish Voice in the Afghan Refugee Crisis.
- Mark Oppenheimer and Bari Weiss in conversation with Rabbi Wolpe on Mark's new book on the Squirrel Hill Tree of Life Synagogue shooting.
- The Abner & Roslyn Goldstine Scholar-in-Residence Lecture Series with Rabbi Delphine Horvilleur.
- Bret Stephens lecture through the Israel Center on the media's representation of Israel.

Our thanks to Abner and Roz Goldstine for their continued support in bringing us the Scholar-in-Residence Series.

### **Atid**

As Atid Director, Briana Monkarsh Benaron has been working hard to engage our Atid age members in programs and events throughout the year with Ted (z"l) & Hedy (z"l) Orden and Family Friday Night Live, book club, adult B'nai Mitzvah classes, lectures, social events, baking classes and other opportunities.

### **Teen Center**

Rabbi Kevin Lefkowitz has hit the ground running since he came back from Israel in January. He is working together with Rabbi Sherman to relaunch the Teen Center and get the teens engaged and active in the Temple. The new members are as follows:

Talia Davood, President  
Davina Yashar, Vice President  
Eva Khorsandi, Social Action Chair  
Sama Mohaber, Social Action Chair  
Jaden Penhaskashi, Israel Chair  
Leah Khorsandi, Israel Chair  
Georgiana Yawitz, Justice and Activism Chair  
Talia Aslmand, Social Programming Chair  
Shira Berukhim, Social Programming Chair

General Council Members  
Brandon Darvish, Sophomore Representative  
Tyler Darvish, Sophomore Representative  
Leah Terani, Freshman Representative  
Lisa Rachmani, Freshman Representative  
Sherwin Hazany, Freshman Representative  
Ryan Yashar, Sophomore Representative  
Jennifer Essapour, Freshman Representative  
Rustin Kharazzi, Sophomore Representative



## **Annual Report: Membership**

**Mehrzaad Roshan, Vice President of Membership**

**Submitted by: Rosa Berman Ruder, Co-Chair of Membership Committee**

The Membership Committee is charged with overseeing all Sinai Temple activities that directly impact our mission to recruit and retain members. The extraordinary array of activities for which Sinai Temple is known was impacted, as everything else, by the Covid closures. We went online for services, programs and classes, and as we thankfully have re-opened our doors to in-person gatherings, our activities have ramped up and are described here, covering every demographic and age group—Atid, Dor Chadash, Sisterhood, and Men's Club. We suffered some resignations due to Covid, but we are happy to report that many of the people who resigned have re-joined, and we look forward to having more members join. We instituted a Virtual Friends of Sinai category for people who live more than 30 miles away from Sinai, so they can have some benefits while participating virtually in our programs and services.

Mid-year, there was some re-structuring in lay leadership and staff. Rob Galperson, VP Membership for the first half of the fiscal year became VP Education and Mehrzaad Roshan became the current VP Membership. Membership Director, Jordan Bleiweiss, resigned and we are undergoing a search for a new Director that will focus on membership engagement, retention and recruitment, and will work with the Database Team on handling the data portion.

### **Membership Committee Structure**

The Membership Committee is composed of 22 members, representing various segments of the congregation and meets once a month. Member names are listed at the end of this report. The current team, composed of Mehrzaad Roshan, Membership VP, Rosa Berman Ruder and Jason Cosgrove, Membership Committee Co-Chairs, and Rabbi Erez Sherman, forms a steering committee and meets every two weeks. In partnership with the members of the committee, we come up with new ideas and implement them over the course of the year.

### **Membership Committee Goals**

1. Increase our engagement of members
2. Better serve the needs of our members
3. Increase the value of membership
4. Attract and retain new members

## **Membership Engagement Activities**

To achieve these goals, to create a warm and welcoming community, to welcome new members to our community, to foster a deeper relationship among clergy and our members, and to engage our members in the life of Sinai temple, we have hosted, sponsored and organized several events which are quite diverse and shows our efforts to reach out to the entire congregation. Here's a list of the events that took place this fiscal year:

\*Dor Chadash Shabbat In The Park--hundreds of attendees per event enjoy food, games and services to welcome the Sabbath on Friday afternoon once a month.

\*Dor Chadash Tot Shabbat With Jason Mesches-every 2 months. Jason Mesches does a rock Shabbat on Pilot Plaza for our ECC.

\*SAA-Family Minyan Shabbats-once a month, 100 attendees pray and eat lunch together.

\*Black Jewish Alliance-Partnering Programs with Faithful Central Bible Church to bridge neighbors.

\*Purim Carnival-over 1000 attendees held at the Good Shepherd School on Sunday March 6, 2022.

\*Havdalah--100 attendees at St Paul the Apostle's outdoor space.

\*Ted <sup>z'l</sup> and Hedy Orden <sup>z'l</sup> Friday Night Live—sold-out dinners of 200 young professionals each month with a service for 300.

\*Introduction to Judaism-class of 20, meeting in person at Sinai Temple, as students learn about Judaism and Sinai Temple.

\*Sinai Dad's Learning--bi-monthly, a group of 20-30 dads gather at a home to learn Torah and discuss modern issues with Rabbi Sherman.

\*A Woman's Perspective Class and Kabbalah Class with Rabbi Guzik—over 30 attendees at each class.

\*Rabbinic visits in ECC-for each holiday and Shabbat, Sinai Temple clergy visit the classrooms (in person!) to teach about the upcoming holiday.

\*Ukrainian Interfaith Prayer Service-our community gathered at Sinai Temple with over 20 faith organizations from our neighborhood: 300 in attendance and thousands online.

\*Sushi Shabbat-April 29<sup>th</sup> open to all members service led by Duvid Swirsky.

\*New Members Shabbat-100 attended on March 4, many new members included.

\*Family Minyan Purim Party—over 300 attendees on the Sinai Temple rooftop made sandwiches for the homeless, ate dinner, and read the Megilla.

\*Passover Seder at Sherman/Guzik Home—2<sup>nd</sup> night seder for 60 people hosted at the Rabbis home for those who need a place to go.

\*Basketball leagues—these will be starting in April as our gyms open up.

\*Sinai Temple Basketball Camp—5 weeks of camp that will bring in \$25,000 this summer.

\*Concert honoring Organist and Choir Director Aryell Cohen on February 20, with Cantors Marcus Feldman, Meir Finkelstein, Arianne Brown, David Silverstein and Jeremy Lipton. Several hundred people attended in person at Sinai and many more watched online.

\*Passover Booklet 2022—The Temple solicited recipes from our members. Many submitted recipes along with stories and memories of Passover celebrations. The Booklet was distributed to our members via email.

\*Rabbi Sherman sends an email to each member on his or her birthday, thus extending warmth and acknowledgment to our members, who respond in kind with words of gratitude and updates on their own families and their life.

**Empty Nesters:** For members who have a child between 18 and 39 (and who may have other children outside this range). Randi and Jerome Greenberg and Farideh and Farshad Rafii co-chair this group and coordinate interesting events: dinner at a kosher restaurant on Pico in March attended by 20 members and a bagel brunch at a private home planned for May 15 with a beekeeper who will talk about harvesting honey and providing some to take home. On June 26, there will be a performance at Sinai by The Braid (formerly Jewish Women's Theatre).

### **Greeters and Bimah Committees**

Greeters have a unique opportunity every Shabbat to interact with our congregants and show them what a warm and welcoming community Sinai Temple is. The bimah committee recognizes and honors members and leaders of the temple by inviting them on the bimah on a rotating basis every Shabbat. Richard Weston coordinates our members to sit on the bimah and Michael Silberstein is chair of the greeting committee. Michael welcomes everyone with love and a warm smile. I would like to recognize and thank Mansoor Eslamboly who is greeting every Shabbat and on HHD. Mansoor has been a member of our temple for over 34 years and has been a dedicated greeter for most of those years.

**Mental Health Center.** In furtherance of our Membership goals of serving the needs of our members and increasing the value of membership, Sinai inaugurated this year its Mental Health Center, generously underwritten by the Fredric D. Rosen and Nadine Schiff-Rosen Family Foundation. Rabbi Nicole Guzik was instrumental in creating this Center, and she explains its

function and programs in a separate report. Carolyn Hoffman, LCSW, is the Director of the Center.

**Membership Retention.** Number of membership units as of December 2021 was 1,435 paid (1,620 total), compared to 1,383 paid (1514 total) in 2020-21.

**Dues Structure.** The Sinai Temple dues structure is very complex, and we are in the process of simplifying the structure. A subcommittee composed of Farideh Rafii and Kerry Maller did extensive research on dues structures of other synagogues in the area. Andre Lev proposed a model. Executive Director Jessica Green embarked on a systematic review and analysis of the existing data and is working on re-structuring the membership dues and a new approach for seat reservations, including issuing electronic High Holy Day tickets.

## **CONCLUSION**

As the impact of the Covid virus diminishes, we hope that more people will feel comfortable gathering again at Sinai for services, classes and programs. We are willing and ready to provide opportunities for our members to engage with each other at Sinai. I want to thank our dedicated clergy and our President for their support and guidance, and Rabbi Sherman for his extraordinary efforts and enthusiasm in connecting with members and building relationships, especially with young families and young professionals.

Special thanks to the members of the committee for their help, guidance and support. The members include co-chairs Rosa Berman Ruder and Jason Cosgrove, and Linda Camras, George Eshaghian, Tom Flesh, Anna Fogelman, Faith Gershbock, Carol Greenberg, Randi Greenberg, Andre Lev, Kerry Maller, Marci Maniker, Lauren Miller, Frank Navi, Michael Nazarian, Sam Parsi, Farideh Rafii, Jina Rezvanpour, Mehrzad Roshan, Peter Rothholz, Michael Silberstein, and Sherry Weinman.

Clergy: Rabbi Erez Sherman

Staff: Briana Benaron, Atid Director



## **Annual Report: Ritual**

**Submitted by Richard Weston, Rosa Berman Ruder and Faith Gershbock  
Vice President and co-chairs of Ritual**

The VP of Ritual oversees all of Sinai Temple's ritual matters. Committees in the VP's portfolio are B'nai Mitzvah, Bikkur Cholim, Ritual, Shiva and Tahara.

The coronavirus pandemic led the synagogue to close its doors for meetings, programs and classes for most of 2020 and much of 2021. In response, the clergy, staff, and lay leaders used a hybrid format of online and in-person programming to provide services, including outdoors venues, to maintain an ongoing connection with our members. Sinai adapted quickly to spikes of Covid infections and for both Shabbat and Holiday services followed the guidance of local health authorities and its own physician advisory committee. Services were streamed online so that people who were not able to attend in person were nevertheless able to benefit from our services and our clergy. We are grateful to our dedicated clergy, lay leaders and hardworking staff for facilitating a virtual connection with Sinai whenever possible. Sinai has since reopened its doors for in-person services, which continue to be streamed so that people who are not yet able to attend may participate.

### **High Holy Day services 5782**

**Main Sanctuary.** Services led by Rabbi David Wolpe and Cantor Marcus Feldman were held in person and were also streamed via audio and video equipment installed last year. Despite all the challenges due to ever-evolving Covid protocols, the services went very smoothly and were inspirational and uplifting. The clergy did a great job finding people to do Torah readings and chanting prayers, and connected with the congregation through sermons and music, with the able assistance of lay ushers and greeters.

**Barad Hall** services led by Rabbi Brad Artson and Cantorial Intern David Childs were held in person only. The services were beautiful as always. Although attendance was lower than in prior years due to Covid protocols for unvaccinated children, whose absence was felt, the members that did attend were happy to be there, and the services were warm and heimish.

**Outdoor Services.** Under the leadership of Rabbis Erez Sherman and Nicole Guzik, all members were invited to an outdoor service for Kol Nidre and Yom Kippur at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints' baseball field, attracting over 1,000 participants of all ages who felt more comfortable in a completely outdoor service. These special High Holy Day services



accommodated those who otherwise would have been unable to attend our in-person services due to Covid restrictions at that time preventing unvaccinated children from entering our building.

**Family Minyan** services led by Rabbi Sherman were held in person in Kohn Chapel on Rosh Hashanah day 1 and in Gold Hall on RH Day 2. Family Minyan also offered a service in Kohn Chapel on Yom Kippur, with the help of Rabbinic intern Kevin Lefkowitz and Jay Harwitt. **Torah in the Round** services led by Rabbi Guzik were held in person in Gold Hall on RH Day 1 and then combined with the Main Sanctuary on RH Day 2. Services in both Kohn Chapel and Gold Hall were also streamed. Young professional **Atid** members were invited to attend all services with unreserved seating, and **Dor Chadash** was offered online programming previously recorded by Rabbis Guzik and Sherman.

### **Religious Services**

**Daily Minyan Services** this year continues to be hybrid, both in person and streamed. While in-person services still have low participation, we have been able to constitute a minyan. When the time changed for daylight savings in the Fall, in addition to in-person services, Rabbi Rosenthal instituted the practice of taping the Kabbalat Shabbat Service ahead of time and included the Yahrzeit and Shiva names for that day. Regular attendees and invited guests attend Daily Minyan to observe a Yahrzeit, Shiva, or B'nai Mitzvah. The return of in-person Daily Minyan services has allowed our members to lead the service on their regular days as they did before the pandemic closure.

Our synagogue offers weekly **Shabbat Services, B'nai Mitzvah Ceremonies and Dor Chadash Shabbat programs**. We also offer once a month **STARS Shabbat service for Religious School, the Ted (z"l) & Hedy (z"l) Orden & Family Friday Night Live, and the Feit Family Shabbat Live**. These services are offered in person and are also streamed. We are thankful to Roy Regev and Gary Fayman for their very competent technical support, and we thank Jorge Garcia for his many years of service as AV staff and wish him well in his new position with the Los Angeles Unified School District.

### **Torah at the Table class**

This class started many years ago at Sinai Temple when a group of members sought to delve deeper into the Torah portion of the week. At 9:30 AM on Shabbat mornings a group of devoted members would travel from the Main Sanctuary to the library on the third floor to engage in discussion, armed with materials to share, and would return to the Sanctuary in time for Musaf and the Rabbi's sermon. Norman Pell, z'l, led the group for many years, followed by Dr. Malcolm Cosgrove, who recently passed the gavel to Judge Norman Tarle. The class is lay led, and different persons take turns in leading the session every week. The class went on zoom during Covid and is now hybrid, with some people at Sinai and others on zoom, including some from out of state and from around the world.

### **Youth activities report by Cantor Feldman**

1. The Sinai Temple Youth Choir, consisting of 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> graders from Sinai Akiba Academy and the Sinai Religious School, actively participates in Shabbat morning services. They appeared virtually during the pandemic but are now meeting in person for rehearsals with Cantor Feldman on Wednesday afternoons in Pilot Plaza and will appear in person to lead some of the prayers in the Main Sanctuary one Shabbat a month. The Youth Choir participated in the Kabbalat Shabbat service on March 4 to welcome new Temple members and provided a lot of ruach.
2. Post B'nai Mitzvah students. Cantor Feldman is reaching out to students who have led prayers and Torah readings in the past to encourage them to read Torah during Shabbat services.
3. Junior Cantors. The cantor is working individually with post-Youth Choir age children to have them participate in services.
4. One-year anniversary of B'nai Mitzvah. The cantor is inviting these children whose families are still members to have an aliya or Torah reading on the first anniversary of their B'nai Mitzvah.

### **Web Parashah**

A subcommittee of the Ritual Committee is engaged in the process of updating the Web Parashah App. This app allows Sinai members to sign up to read Torah and Haftorah on Shabbat and Holidays. Cantor Feldman uses this APP to send messages to members with available dates to read. The Cantor also contacts post B'nai Mitzvah students to mark the anniversary of their B'nai Mitzvah by reading or having an Aliyah, as mentioned in 2 and 4 above.

### **Other services/musical programs**

1. Special Shabbat Service. April 25, 2022 is the last Shabbat with Aryell Cohen as Organist, and there will be a special service that day.
2. Fast of the First-Born services will take place on Friday morning April 15 in person at Sinai. Passover begins that same day in the evening.
3. Concert in honor of Aryell Cohen. The Temple had a wonderful concert on February 20, 2022, celebrating Aryell Cohen's 46 years of service to Sinai Temple as Organist & Choir Director. The concert featured cantors and choir members that worked together with Aryell over the course of his career. You can view this wonderful event online by following this link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Y2dixlksAE&ab\\_channel=SinaiTemple](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Y2dixlksAE&ab_channel=SinaiTemple).

### **Bikkur Cholim**

The **Bikkur Cholim Committee** is an integral part of our caring community and is chaired by Angela Maddahi. The committee receives information from the clergy and fellow Sinai Temple members about members of our community who are lonely and/or ill. We reach out to them to see if we can help in any way or just provide companionship. We also send them get well cards and other encouraging notes, and from time to time we set up a meal train. We hope in the near future to be able to set up in-person hospital and home visits once again, which had to be suspended during the pandemic. The committee has not met in person due to Covid, but intends to do so later this year.

Members of the Bikkur Cholim committee are Jamie Berman, Rosa Berman Ruder, Linda Camras, Tiffany Farahnik, Roz Goldstine, Alexis Harouni, Mahnaz Hekmat, Judi Hoffman, Charlotte Kamenir, Elaine Lotwin, Rachelle Marcus, Diane Marder, Parivash Minou Michlin, Golda Mendelsohn, Edie Nitzberg, Lisa Pompan, Mehrzad Roshan, Lori Silfen, Shirley Singer, Michelle Taus, Nehama Tesfai, Fran Stengel. Staff/clergy: Adina Miller Winnett, Jay Harwitt, Cantor Marcus Feldman, Rabbi Nicole Guzik, Rabbi Adam Rosenthal, Rabbi Erez Sherman, and Rabbi David Wolpe.

### **B'nai Mitzvah**

The **B'nai Mitzvah Committee** reviews B'nai Mitzvah eligibility for students with special circumstances. This committee was chaired by Ellie Pourbaba for many years, and we thank her for her dedicated service. Sam Parsi has now taken on the leadership of this important committee and continues the tradition of assisting families with this very special occasion. In 2020 and 2021 respectively we had approximately 72 and 87 B'nai Mitzvah ceremonies. In 2022 so far we have approximately 83 B'nai Mitzvah dates on the calendar.

### **Ritual**

This year, among other things, the **Ritual committee** has focused on enhancing knowledge of Jewish rituals. The Ritual Committee sponsored a Passover Recipe Exchange program, which allowed Temple members to connect and share a piece of family history through favorite Passover recipes. The recipes were gathered in a Virtual Booklet by Adina Miller Winnett, along with "A Journey into the Festival of Pesah" compiled by Rosa Berman Ruder, which provides information about Passover rituals and traditions that can be used as points of discussion at the seder.

### **Shiva**

The **Shiva Committee** is headed by Estelle Marco, and she has reached out to families who request support. The **Taharah Committee** was not active due to the coronavirus pandemic.

I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to the hard-working co-chairs of the committee, Rosa Berman Ruder and Faith Gershbock, and all the other chairs and members of the subcommittees. Special thanks to Rabbi Guzik, Rabbi Rosenthal, Angela Maddahi, Ellie Pourbaba and Sam Parsi for their contributions. Members of the Ritual Committee are: Leon Biederman, Jason Cosgrove, Malcolm Cosgrove, George Eshaghian, Mansour Eslamboly, Ira

Friedman, Abner Goldstine, Roz Goldstine, Carole Greenberg, Mark Haloossim, Paul Herman, Jerry Janoff, Angela Maddahi, Kerry Maller, Estelle Marco, Rachelle Marcus, David Matloob, Golda Mendelsohn, Frank Navi, Michael Nazarian, Sharona Nazarian, Sam Parsi, Lisa Pompan, Ellie Pourbaba, Jina Rezvanpour, Mehrzad Roshan, Peter Rothholz, Rica Sabah, Lili Shafai, Michael Silberstein, Ebby Tabariai, Joel Weinstein, and Michael Arnall. Staff/Clergy: Jessica Green, Danielle Kassin, Rebeka Small, Aryell Cohen, Rabbi Andy Feig, Cantor Marcus Feldman, Rabbi Nicole Guzik, Rabbi Adam Rosenthal, Rabbi Erez Sherman, and Rabbi David Wolpe.



## **Annual Report: Innovation and Technology**

**Submitted by: Daniel Delshad, Vice President of Innovation and Technology**

This is the first Annual Report for this newly created role of Vice President of Innovation and Technology. This role was created to help drive innovation across the entire as well as using technology to drive efficiencies across the Temple.

**Committees:** This role oversees the Communications and the Technology Committees for the Temple.

The mission of these committees are as follows:

**Communications Committee** - administers all public relations, advertising, print material, and other communications originated by Sinai Temple.

**Information Technology System Committee** - has oversight responsibilities concerning the role of technology in supporting the mission of Sinai Temple and its schools.

Members of these committees are:

### **Communications Committee**

Chair: Leslie Wachtel

Members: Sam Parsi, Rabbi Erez Sherman, Jamie Berman, Jason Cosgrove, Ashley Waterman, Andre Leb.

Staff: Roy Regev, Gary Fayman.

### **Information Technology System Committee**

Chair: Eric Mamos

Members: Leon Biederman, Daniel Delshad, Allen Kamrava, DJ Simhaee, Michael Wacht.

Top Achievements for the Communications Committee:

- Upgrading our video and audio experience: Integrating live audio mixing tools and an online platform for creating on the fly edited videos and audio. Necessary for our social media platform and new podcast channels.

- Hired a new AV Coordinator: with experience in the digital audio and visual realm, while helping ST with online content and video editing. Hopefully, can reduce our needs for audio vendors soon.
- Perfecting our live broadcast experience: audio mixing for in-house and broadcast, three different monitor setups (Bima, audience, home view), special light configuration and additional cameras. Typical Weekends: Ted (z"l) & Hedy (z"l) Orden and Family Friday Night Live, 2 Bar Mitzvahs, Sisterhood Shabbat.
- Bar Mitzvah Family video system: defined process cross-functionally to make departments are working together to manage this video product and allow for some revenue generation to help cover costs of production.
- Website Upgrade:
  - Conducted a survey across the entire Temple membership, Executive Committee, and staff to properly assess our current website and to help us define the future needs for the website.
  - Prioritized feedback and changes into a requirements doc to be provided to potential web firms to provide proposal to update the website.

#### **Top Achievements for the Technology Committee:**

- Hiring of Michael Wacht as technology consultant to help us streamline and execute all technology projects on time and on budget.
- Full Inventory and Invoice review from the past year
  - Received over \$21k in credits due to billing mistakes / pushback on Project Time billed by Vendor.
  - Reduced monthly cost by ~\$2k due to removal of extra computers from management, Executive Director's initiative to enforce 1:1 computer per employee compliance.
- Current Server Situation
  - Down to 2 servers, mostly to support EMS Event Management Software
  - New EMS Cloud Based software approved, project will take another 8 weeks to complete, and then the rest of the servers will be removed.
- Consolidated Phone Billing
  - We consolidated all the phone bills into a single bill, and reduced the cost per month.
- Managing IT Vendor, making sure they are delivering services correctly and correcting mistakes.
- Updated HR onboarding processes for new / terminated employees with PBO and Integritek so that things are not missed.
- Streamlining the Finance software and payment workflow with Leon (still work in process).
- Dynamix - VOIP Provider
  - The system was broken due to poor internal management. Calls were being misrouted. Voice response menus were outdated / not working. Call timeframes were broken.

- Working with Dynamix to fix issues, re-setup call flow and create new instruction guides for how to modify system so that Sinai Temple has a written guide for common functions in the system.
- Continuing to work on open projects / improvements to the IT systems and workflows
- SharePoint and Microsoft Teams training - better internal communication and storage of shared files so that data isn't siloed anymore. There was a roadblock in the past where people would store things locally and when they went on vacation / got terminated, files got lost.
- Group and Security Structure Cleanup - Jessica performed a miracle by getting everyone together in a meeting to finally hash out who needs access to what, so we could remove a lot of dead files and unused groups. As well as access for people who shouldn't have it.

### **Key Metrics:**

#### **Current Email Stats: last 12 months**

- 20,222 contacts
- 2,308 new added contacts
- 411 came from forms/websites
- 1,456 unsubscribed
- 2,146,613 emails sent
- Open rate: 36%
- Click Rate: 11%
- 60% desktop
- 40% mobile

#### **Current Social Stats: last 6 months**

- Facebook: 3.85k Fans
- 40,749 Page reach (+3% this year)
  - 287 posts
  - 9.1k engagement
    - 6.2k reactions
    - 2k comments
    - 967 shares
  - 32k clicks on content
- Instagram: 1.5k followers (+4%)
- +78% over last 90 days – 5485 accounts reached (457 engaged)
  - 1.7k engagements
    - 1.4k photo
    - 270 Carousel album
    - 55 video

**Conclusion:**

It's been an amazing first year in this new role and I am truly appreciative of all the hard work by the entire lay leadership and most importantly the staff of the Temple. I would like to also thank Leslie Wachtel who has been an unbelievable Chair of the Communications committee and has really helped drive many of the key accomplishments for this Committee. Even during Covid, we were able to accomplish many key projects that will help us connect with our membership. We look forward to continuing to drive innovation over the next year and help provide the best experience as we look to bring digital experiences and improve our digital communication to a new level.





## **Annual Report: General Counsel/Corporate Secretary**

**Submitted By: Jimmy C. Taus, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary**

The role of General Counsel provides counseling and advice for the corporation, both Sinai Temple and Sinai Akiba Academy, and work with all outside lawyers representing the corporation or providing services to the corporation. The role of corporate secretary is to certify when actions are required of the Board of Directors.

**Committees:** Bylaws, Contracts, Legal

### **Committee members include:**

#### **Bylaws Committee**

**Chair:** Cary Lerman, **Members:** Jamie Berman, Tom Flesh, Abner Goldstine, Kam Hekmat, David Kekst, M. Milo Mandel, David Matloob, Jina Rezvanpour, Robert Strauss, Jimmy Taus, Joel Weinstein, Michael Arnall, President.

#### **Contracts Committee**

**Chair:** Jimmy C. Taus, **Members:** David Ascher, Jamie Berman, Leon Biederman, Linda Camras, Tom Flesh, Abner Goldstine, David Kekst, Cary Lerman, David Matloob, Sam Parsi, Julie Platt, Shervin Rashti, Jina Rezvanpour, Michael Arnall, President.

#### **Legal Committee**

**Chair:** Jimmy Taus, **Members:** Ira Friedman, Sharon Gold, Cary Lerman, M Milo Mandel, Joel Weinstein.

### **Top achievements of 2020- 2021 include:**

The Contracts Committee has been deeply involved in negotiating and preparing contracts for clergy as well as with some administrators in Sinai Akiba and the Religious School. Our Bylaws committee has been active in updating our Bylaws, including modifications to accommodate special circumstances during the Pandemic. The legal committee was key in working with administration and outside counsel concerning threatened legal action against the School and Temple and defeating any such claims before they could even be filed. COVID and COVID related issues were a major element of work done by the committees under the General Counsel.

In addition, various members of the legal committee have provided an ad hoc basis counseling to the General Counsel on a number of legal issues as they occur.

The General Counsel reviews all contracts between Sinai and/or SAA and third parties to insure that our interests are protected.



## **Annual Report: Atid**

**Submitted By: Briana Monkarsh Benaron, Atid Director**

We welcomed 2021 on an optimistic yet cautious foot. Determined to reconnect in-person and re-build the Atid community, young professionals rallied together to help our senior members get immunized. With the partnership of Debra Eisen and the Sisterhood Vaccination Project, several young adults eagerly stepped up to personally call 250+ Sinai members to secure vaccination appointments.

January through June, Atid opted for virtual events, as vaccines slowly rolled out for young adults. To celebrate Passover, we enlisted Sinai Temple member and SAA alum Henry Platt and NY Times best-selling cookbook author Jake Cohen for an intimate 40 person Zoom. From their personal kitchens, Jake Cohen and Henry walked through the recipe for Passover Macaroon Brownies, while chatting about family traditions, favorite bagel toppings, and more. Capitalizing on our Zoom event success, Atid brought in Logan Ury, a Harvard-educated behavioral scientist-turned-dating coach at Hinge and author. Logan and Rabbi Wolpe discussed her new book *How to Not Die Alone* and navigating modern dating as a young Jewish professional (especially in a pandemic). This event generated over 250 sign ups and was streamed on Facebook and BoxCast. Participants gave feedback that the program inspired dating with intention and prioritizing their love life, despite the uncertain times we were experiencing.

A few months and doses of Pfizer and Moderna later, we were thrilled to gather face-to-face and kick off in-person events! In true Atid fashion, we launched with a revamped version of The Ted (z"l) & Hedy (z"l) Orden and Family Friday Night Live, hosted outdoors under string lights on Pilot Plaza. With a new 5-piece band, led by Duvid Swirsky, a delicious Kosher spread, and nearly 100 people, this was the first of 9 subsequent packed Ted (z"l) & Hedy (z"l) Orden Family Friday Night Lives to follow. Other notable highlights from these *Shabbatot* include: a Thanksgiving feast, Journalist Danielle Robay, Life-coach Kevin Nahai, a new tradition of stumping the band, delicious food offerings, thoughtful opportunities to schmooze and mingle, revitalizing outdoor spaces at Sinai Temple, and by the end of March, over a 65% rate of repeat participants with over 120 attendees each month.

Word spread quickly that Atid was back in person, and we wasted no time capitalizing on our momentum. In July, we planned a summer outdoor happy hour at an ideal West LA venue. Our crowd, consisting of around 150 people, spilled over our reserved tables, taking over the entire 4,000 square foot patio, and we closed the place down. The timing of this happy hour was perfectly positioned to promote Sinai's discounted young membership rates and High Holy Day

offerings. Hanukkah quickly approached, bringing us together at Bob's at The Farmer's Market for "Java and Jelly Donuts," which was recognized by JLiving magazine.

Other notable successes in 2022 thus far include:

- 2 in-person cohorts (consisting of about 15 participants each) of Fuel For Truth, a six-week Israel education course for young professionals. This JNF program covers the modern history of Israel, major issues surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the best practices for effectively discussing these topics in the real world. Atid, JNF and JNFutures have a deeply valued partnership that we are thrilled to continue through Happy Hours, Israel education classes, and more.
- Guest speaker Rudy Rochman, Jewish-Israel Rights Activist, in conversation with Tabby Refael, author at Jewish Journal, in partnership with StandWithUs' young professional network. Atid hosted this event in Kohn chapel with nearly 100 young adults.
- Hamantaschen Baking with 60 Atid women and Samantha Weiner, MFT, Founder of Wellness by Samantha, and Sinai Temple member at the home of Rabbis Guzik and Sherman.
- Dance with Robyn Rapaport, Book Club with Sarah Gitman and Yoga with Becky Blitz are part of continuous programming for our Atid community. These offerings are led with intention by the next generation of life-long Sinai Temple families – always supported by Andrea Stern as well.
- Inaugural Black Jewish Alliance dinner in partnership with the Faithful Center Baptist Church hosted at Sinai Temple with Rabbi David Wolpe and Rabbi Erez Sherman in attendance.
- Partnership with the Sinai Social Action Committee for an evening of "Packing with Purpose," packing hygiene and food bags for UCLA's Food Closet. Atid has formed a new partnership with the SAC and has a representative on the committee, Dana Schmidt.
- A sold-out Atid/Sinai Temple Second Night Seder at the home of Rabbis Guzik and Sherman with 60+ individuals (ranging in age from 20-90).
- The creation of a young couple's network and chavurah program.
- Increased Facebook, YouTube and social media presence, engagement and interactions. Atid's Instagram following has increased 44% from 422 to 750. Between the months of May and March, Atid's Facebook metrics indicate a 277% increase in reach (18,392 new reaches).

- As we continue to grow our listserv of over 5,000 young adults, especially through the offering of new events that attract first-time attendees and partnering with other YP Jewish organizations, the Atid newsletter open rate reached higher than ever-before at about 40%!

With the Atid flood gates now wide open and several young adults running through, we feel a sense of renewed *ruach*, excitement, contagious warmth, and an impressive, diverse and inclusive community. We look forward to creating a leadership committee of our core participants, re-launching our Sinai Basketball Association league with revenue-generating fees, garnering more young Sinai Temple members, and partnering with other groups in the synagogue, while always continuing to lead with “the why” behind each and everything we do.

The Atid department feels very grateful for the guidance and support of Rabbis Guzik and Sherman, Jessica Green, The Men’s Club, the SAC, and the Membership Committee.

A - D visuals included below:

- Duvid Swirsky, sold-out Ted (z”l) & Hedy (z”l) Orden Family Friday Night Live song-leader.
- Purim Hamantaschen baking at the home of Rabbis Guzik and Sherman
- Summer Outdoor Happy Hour at an outdoor bar in West LA
- Hannukah hanging with Java and Jelly Donuts at The Original Farmer’s Market



A.



B.



C.



D.

To learn more about Atid, always feel free to reach out to Briana at [bbenaron@sinaitemple.org](mailto:bbenaron@sinaitemple.org).



## **Annual Report: Sisterhood**

**Submitted By: Marcy Melton, President**

The Sinai Temple Sisterhood mission is to empower a diverse group of women of varying ages to observe and promote Jewish values and traditions, and enjoy warmth and friendship in the process. While enriching our lives through our many activities, we support Sinai Temple, Conservative Judaism and the greater community through our social action programs and fundraising efforts. We value the energy, ideas and participation that our members bring. This mission is enacted by our Executive Committee and Board of Directors, with the help of many on various committees.

2021 saw a slight increase in our ability to come together due to the availability of COVID vaccines and boosters, along with periodic waning in the number of cases of the virus. All of our monthly meetings were hybrid -- both in person and on Zoom. Our monthly Rosh Hodesh gatherings began in person and then moved to Zoom as of the beginning of 2022. We enjoyed our first in-person Shabbaton in two years on Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> and assisted in funding both the tribute to Aryell Cohen and the Purim Carnival which were in person. Our Project Outreach was reinstated this year, going to homes of those in need to provide holiday food and items for for Rosh Hashanah, Chanukah, and Pesach. We came together monthly on Zoom for our Sip N Schmooze program, connecting our members just to chat, and we continued our monthly book club on an online basis only as well. After a few in person meetings with participants, the March of the Living scheduled for 2022 was cancelled due to the war in Ukraine, which is directly affecting Poland.

On May 24<sup>th</sup> we are looking forward to a very special in-person event – our annual Torah Fund Luncheon, which we have been unable to hold in person the last two years. We're making a roaring comeback with our Chay Ay Olam recipient being Rabbi David Wolpe! Torah Fund is the main fundraising vehicle for the Women's League of Conservative Judaism, with which our Sisterhood is affiliated. These funds are used to support the five Conservative/Masorti seminaries worldwide, providing scholarships to the students enrolled.

The main focus of Sisterhood's fundraising is for Sinai Temple and its two schools. We accomplish that through Sisterhood Catering, which provides delicious and beautiful spreads for B'nei Mitzvahs, weddings, and new baby celebrations. In addition, our Judaica Shop provides beautiful candlesticks, Kiddush cups, tallitot and more. Due to the pandemic, our

ability to raise funds has been drastically reduced. We have done very few catering events, opened our gift shop by appointment only, and taken our education classes online only. Unaffected by the pandemic was our High Holiday Greeting Cards and Honey Sales, which both did very well.

The health crisis will continue to dictate when and how we can come together as a group, and we will endeavor to offer new and innovative educational, spiritual, social action and social programming to meet our mission.



## **Annual Report: Men's Club**

**Submitted By: Michael Silberstein, President**



Dear Men's Club Followers,

Men's Club provides a unique and warm environment in which our members attend interesting and varied programs, work together, and simply have an enjoyable time being with others who share Jewish values, a commitment to Israel, and a desire to lead and give back to the community.

We have regularly scheduled meetings, usually the first Tuesday of every month, where we bring extraordinary and engaging speakers to talk about Jewish values, the State of Israel, health, self-improvement, spirituality, and leadership. The meetings typically begin with a free, light dinner, followed by a chance to mingle with other members and guests, and then our program.

The Men's Club is devoted to the well-being of Jews throughout the world and specifically in the State of Israel. Our monthly programs include speakers who share their views on Israel's historic and unprecedented achievements, the challenges it faces, and ways we can be effective in supporting the only Jewish state we have.

We also host programs with experts on health issues, personal development, and, in general, what is sometimes referred to as self-help or self-improvement efforts.

Let me share the status of the Men's Club, events, and future directions for our amazing members who participate in our programs. First, we want to let you know that the Men's Club is committed to our Burning Bush event. Unfortunately, this has been on hold for the last few years due to Covid. Our hope is to have a Burning Bush event in 2023 so that we can honor



Farshad and Farideh Raffi along with raising monies for Ethiopian Jews in Israel as well as Sinai Temple's General Fund. We hope that in 2023, we can have this event with the same enthusiasm and participation that we have seen in previous events. Stay tuned for the new date in 2023.

We also miss our member, Jeff Kichaven. We hope that one day, we can have Jeff back in the Sinai Community as he is an amazing leader and supports our beautiful rituals and support of Israel every day. He is a real mensch!

Also, let me share a plan presently in motion. We are looking to have an outdoor event in the next couple of months to bring our community together and share some hearty laughs with comedian Elon Gold. Stay tuned with more details. This event will be set up so we can raise monies for the fantastic ATID group, led by Briana Benaron. She is bringing the spark and flame to Jewish professionals ages 20-40 and the Men's Club supports her dedication and focus for our Jewish future!

With that being said, the Men's Club has continued to have monthly discussions on a myriad of topics including:

- 1) Cancel Culture discussion with Professor Alan Dershowitz and Dan Adler
- 2) Mental Health and the Jewish Community with Carolyn Hoffman and Andrea Sonnenberg
- 3) Public Service, Patents, and Judaism with Andrei Iancu and Jeff Kichaven
- 4) Molecules, Medicine, and Curing Disease – with Dr. Phil Zakowski and Arron Nazarian
- 5) How to Navigate the #MeToo Era with Wisdom & Jewish Values with Ivy Kagen Beierman and Jeff Kichaven
- 6) The Harvard Admissions Case & Race Based Affirmative Action with Dean Chemerinsky and Professor Sander
- 7) How to Teach Our Children How to Communicate About Israel with our own Jimmy Taus. Note: Jimmy is so passionate around helping children and adults learning how to defend and talk about their Jewish heritage. (Please engage him for YOUR group discussions!)
- 8) How to Double Down on our Jewish Identity During the Christmas Holiday Season with Rabbi Adam Greenwald
- 9) There is a Reason Why Jews Write the Best Sitcoms and It's Not Because They Are Funny with our own Ken Levine
- 10) The Roots of the Jewish People in Comedy with our own Cantor Feldman and Comedian Elon Gold

We just had an extraordinary Men's Club Shabbat where we featured:

- 1) Taking the Torah through the Sinai Congregation. This was the first time in 2 years due to Covid. Shechianu!
- 2) The Men's Club Choir singing L'Dor V'Dor, Sim Shalom, Aleinu, and more! (Yes, this choir is available for all your events. Book them today!)

- 3) Mi Shebeirach prayers under a Chuppah on the bimah
- 4) Torah honors for many, many congregants in the Sinai Community!

We also held a blood drive available to Cedars Sinai. To donate blood is to save a life. As you may be aware, the Men's Club funds Kiddush Cups and tzedakah boxes for the B'nai Mitzvah students each shabbat.

The Men's Club would like to resume our discussions in person very soon and hope you will decide to join us as a community. Our discussions are amazing and the delicious food that we serve after the meeting will hit the spot!

Please renew your membership to the Men's Club as it is open to men and women! Come be with your old friends and make new friends as well!

Finally, I want to encourage you all to come back to shul in person. If I can share, I take lots of vitamins each day to strengthen my body. But there is only one real nutrient for my soul and that is coming to shul. I know it is 100% effective and I encourage you to join our amazing community. Outside of our cherished Torahs, our community is the second most valuable asset at Sinai. Come back to shul and be a part of it today!

Kol Tov,

Michael Silberstein  
Sinai Temple Men's Club President



## **Annual Report: Chai Society**

**Submitted By: Rachelle Marcus, Chair**

The Chai Society members were the official Shabbat greeters of Sinai Temple, welcoming worshippers, and guests twice a month at Shabbat services. The Chai Society greeted the second and fourth Shabbat and met once a month at Sinai Temple. In addition we also enjoyed many social outings to attend plays, museums, movies, and dining at restaurants.

You noticed that everything is past tense because for the past two years our group has been inactive due to the pandemic. We sadly lost our co-chair Richard Greenberg of blessed memory and many other members have had health issues and have become home bound and our membership has decreased to approximately 40 members most of whom attend services virtually.



## **Annual Report: Sinai Temple Board of Governors**

**Submitted By: Barton H. Kogan and Paul Herman, M.D.,**

**Co-Chairs of the Board of Governors**

**Contacts :** [BHKogan@aol.com](mailto:BHKogan@aol.com) or [herman.paul4@gmail.com](mailto:herman.paul4@gmail.com)

The mission of the Sinai Temple Board of Governors (BOG) is to independently review and discuss the issues and policies of importance to Sinai Temple, and support our leaders, clergy, staff, members, our President and the Sinai Board of Directors (BOD) to develop, host and sponsor religious and cultural activities consistent with Sinai's mission and all special projects as directed by the Sinai Temple President.

The BOG was established in 1973 to provide a forum to discuss synagogue policy and programs; and to advise the Temple president and BOD. It was envisioned to tap the talent and experience of former BOD members and congregational leaders not currently serving on the BOD, to offer their time, suggestions and good counsel.

Members are elected by the BOD as recommended by the BOG co-chairs. Temple members of at least 3 years who are also past members of the BOD are eligible. All Past Temple presidents also serve on the BOG.

The BOG seeks to complement the BOD's efforts by supporting and planning projects of religious, educational, social or artistic significance that may be enjoyed by the members of Sinai Temple.

### **Past Projects and Temple support:**

- **Yamim Nora'im**--An 88 page supplementary prayer volume for the High Holy Days.
- **Mitzvah Magnet**--Five core Mitzvot and the hours of Shabbat services and the Daily Minyan.
- **Pocket Calendars**--Handy calendars with Jewish Holidays and Shabbat candle lighting times.
- **Welcome Booklet**--A guide for non-Jews and guests to our Shabbat morning worship.

**Sinai Yellow Pages**--This booklet enabled members to patronize each other if they so chose.

**Sponsor Community Sinai events**-- the BOG sponsored and hosted Temple-wide parties and other events honoring Sinai clergy and lay leadership in the Temple and in the community; contributed to the Sinai Temple Centennial and other Dinner Journals, made other appropriate

donations honoring our Temple leaders as called upon; sponsored events welcoming new members and clergy; the Sinai Go Green Project and the annual Sinai-wide BOG Shabbat Swap, Sinai Centennial Mitzvah Day and contributed to *Masorti*, *Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs*, and *Sinai Temple* annual fundraising dinners honoring our lay and professional leadership.

**Archive Sinai Temple artifacts-** At the request of our Temple president, the BOG, permanently updated, categorized and verified all Sinai Temple religious and secular artifacts with our office staff.

#### **2020-22 New, Continuing Projects and Sinai Temple support:**

- **Gifts to our B'nai Mitzvah**--Sponsor the gift of Rabbi Wolpe's book, *Why Be Jewish?*.
- **Curators**—Coordinate and select exhibitions of paintings and photographs in the Merage Art Gallery.
- **Serve as Usher, Greeters and on the BIMA** for Shabbat and Holiday services as requested annually.
- **Serve on Temple Committees** in all aspects of Temple operations as part of our charge to offer sage advice and counsel to Sinai Temple.
- **"Better Together" Religious School Shabbat Program.** The BOG has joined with Danielle Kassin and Michal Morriskamil (Michal) to assist in this fledgling program designed to bridge the generations at Sinai through interaction with 6<sup>th</sup> graders, the BOG and our Israel Levin Center friends.
- **\*\*During our monthly "Better Together" sessions featuring relevant themes developed by Michal have been presented virtually via zoom.**
- **Visibility** Increase our branding within the Temple and recruit additional members who meet the requirements set in the Sinai Temple Bylaws.



## **Mount Sinai Mortuaries and Memorial Parks Annual Report to the Sinai Temple Membership**

**Submitted by: Eric J. Diamond  
Chairman of the Sinai Temple Cemetery Management Committee**

Last year I wrote at length regarding the impact of COVID-19. While, sadly, we continue to handle COVID-19 cases, thankfully they are relatively few in number. We continue to provide these families with the support and consideration that we exhibited throughout the pandemic.

As COVID cases have dropped and related governmental restrictions have eased, we have been able to return our operations to “normal.” We resumed funeral ceremonies in our chapels and face masks are now optional rather than government mandated. Hopefully we’ve turned the corner and will not see a return of these restrictions.

One lasting impact of the COVID-19 experience is our extended engagement with our families in need. This year Mount Sinai initiated its *MS Cares* program. Every family receives a call 30 days after its service to check in and to determine if there is anything that Mount Sinai can do to support them. While relatively new, the program has been very well received by the community. Mount Sinai also implemented a new electronic customer survey system. Each client family receives an electronic survey 30 days after their service or pre-need property purchase. Responses to this survey rate Mount Sinai’s service at least 8 of 10 and more than 90% would refer us to friends and family. Finally, Mount Sinai initiated grief counseling workshops to aid Mount Sinai and Sinai Temple families.

Virtually every operational metric at Mount Sinai showed improvement this year. Our mortuary market share increased from approximately 35% to approximately 40%. Much of this increase is attributable to a new website and updated digital marketing program. On average Mount Sinai receives 150 new calls per month from these initiatives. Year over year revenue increased approximately 4% with strong pre-need demand in both the Hollywood Hills and Simi Valley.

Strong financial results allowed Mount Sinai to continue to again grow its annual base-line support for Sinai Temple. This annual support is supplemented by contributions to a variety of Sinai Temple and Sinai Akiba programs and initiatives. Additionally, Mount Sinai expanded its long standing grants program, disbursing a total of almost \$300,000 to 32 separate Jewish organizations.

In order to maintain its ability to serve the Jewish community, Mount Sinai continued its active development program. This year we completed development of the Proverbs section in Hollywood Hills (nearly 1,000 new interment spaces) and completed the pre-construction design and permitting for the Meditations section (170 interment spaces). Construction of the Meditations area will begin this summer and be completed in the Winter of 2023. This summer we will also begin construction of the new “natural burial” area in Simi Valley. This section will incorporate “native” plant material and omit lawn type landscaping and paving. The section will include approximately 200 unique interment spaces, different from anything else available in the community.

Mount Sinai’s success is largely due to the professionalism and commitment of the professional staff. Under the leadership of our General Manager, Mr. Randy Schwab, the staff works tirelessly to serve our families and to deliver the highest level of service in the industry.

I conclude this year by again acknowledging and expressing my personal appreciation for the men and women, all volunteers, who devote countless hours to serving on the Cemetery Management Committee and its various sub-committees. This year we saw Malcolm Cosgrove, Milton Hyman, Dan Merritt and Eric Swanson end their service on the Cemetery Management Committee. For Malcolm, Milt and Dan, this was the end to decades of dedicated service. At the same time, we welcomed Rob Galperson, David Kekst and Cary Lerman to the committee. All have already made noticeable contributions. Continuing their service with these recent additions are Linda Camras, Jim Delshad, Tom Flesh, Ira Friedman, Abner Goldstine, Robert Held, Thomas Lane, M. Milo Mandel, Kurt Smalberg, Perry Wallack, Joel Weinstein, Richard Weston and Sinai’s President Michael Arnall. We would not achieve our continuing success without their active service, professional experience, and thoughtful judgment.