

SYNERGY

UJA - FEDERATION OF NEW YORK AND SYNAGOGUES TOGETHER

New York Synagogues Reach Out

Elinor Nauen

If we think of *keruv* as “drawing near those who are far,” the question becomes how to make our synagogues meaningful places, especially for those who in one way or another may feel indifferent, marginalized, or even unwelcome. As Rabbi Michael Strassfeld at the Society for the Advancement of Judaism says, “We need to challenge ourselves to think about what we do and say that encourages or discourages inclusiveness.” Barriers could be financial, unfamiliarity, a lack of urgency (“no need to join till my kid’s older”), or simply not knowing how to find a house of worship. The following describe innovative plans and programs some area congregations have created to cope with such obstacles:

“Beginners Service at Lincoln Square Synagogue was developed in 1975 by two students who were studying with me in a Bible class on Tuesday mornings. They said, if I would conduct a service for people with little or no background, they would come. For six months, there were four of us. Then *The New York Times* published an article in 1977, and it took off. Services are conducted like a class, and we supplement the program with lunches and schmoozes, so it’s not

just a service but a community. Now there are about 175 to 250 Beginners Services all over the U.S. that meet on a regular basis, with more meeting on the High Holidays. It’s a success because it’s interactive: people aren’t just sitting at a performance. It’s fun, open, and freewheeling, and you really don’t have to know anything. As many as a quarter of Lincoln Square’s 600 families started at a Beginners Service, including some significant leaders and donors. So it’s not only a service — it’s an investment that pays off.”

— Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald, director of The National Jewish Outreach Program and founder of the Beginners Service at Lincoln Square Synagogue, Manhattan, 600 households

“We are trying to establish multiple points of connection, since no single one will be adequate for every individual or family. Our Coffee Talk program meets three or four times a year and includes a lay facilitator, around 18 to 24 participants, and a discussion topic that is e-mailed beforehand. Topics have included how to handle the holidays and my High Holiday sermon on Israel. Coffee Talk attracts Jewish and non-Jewish women, most in interfaith relationships, and is a place where they deal with those issues in a very open way. We’re spinning this off to a lunchtime book group, but



TEMPLE BETH-EL OF GREAT NECK

we’ll still have Coffee Talk. Also, our Outreach Committee hosts an annual cocktail party at someone’s house. A hundred people came to the last one. Conversations happen, and relationships are strengthened. At our annual Outreach Shabbat, I made a special *mishaberach* for non-Jewish partners to affirm their role. We also have a program called New Beginnings for people or their spouses who have converted within the last year to talk about their families and the process. Reaching out is reaching in — these aren’t people who are walking by on the street; they are part of the congregation. Reaching out to them strengthens us from within.”

— Rabbi Jeffrey Sirkman, Larchmont Temple, Larchmont, New York, 800+ households



FOREST HILLS JEWISH CENTER

“Last year, I purchased a list of 400-some names of people who had moved into the area within the last year and somehow indicated they were Jewish. We had beautiful postcards made up with a picture of our synagogue, and we sent them out, inviting people to our High Holiday services, which are open to everybody — we don’t require tickets. We didn’t track them, so I can’t tell exactly how successful this was, but we got a lot of calls from people saying they had gotten that card and asking for more information. We plan to do it again this year and hope to figure out a way to track responses.”

— Susan Roth, membership outreach chair at Bet Am Shalom Synagogue, White Plains, New York, 400+ households

“In 2002 – 2003, we started a program geared to families with young children to overcome the financial block that prevents membership. We began to offer free religious-school tuition for kindergarten through third grade, along with free synagogue membership that steps up in cost until the oldest kid is in fourth grade, when membership

is required to become a bar or bat mitzvah at Beth-El. Our thought was, once the children get involved and have friends, it will strengthen and maintain their Jewish connection and education, and give the background to build a long-term connection. We placed ads in the local paper: ‘You can’t put a price on Jewish education. So we didn’t.’ We have special services and activities for families, such as children’s services on the High Holidays, Tot Shabbat on Saturday mornings, and services on Friday nights for kids through second grade, a group that serves as a bridge between nursery school and congregation. Since then, 26 families have joined, and at least half have stayed. We had no kids in a kindergarten class in 2001 – 2002; last year, we had 11. We’d like them to join us, and we treat them like part of the synagogue. We welcome everyone, for almost everything, as if they were members.”

— Senior Associate Rabbi Reni Altman, Temple Beth-El, Great Neck, New York, 1,100 households, 300 kids in religious school

“Most recently, we have been concentrating on making our nursery-school and religious-school families feel more a part of the synagogue. Often, they drop off their kids and pick them up later, as has been the case for decades. So we program more family-oriented things. For example, twice a year we have family Shabbat dinners. We keep the price down, so families with young children aren’t going to the cash machine for dinner. They’re informal, with singing and legal Shabbat games. Sometimes there are programs for parents, sometimes just a chance to sit and talk and get to know people. Our executive board and membership chairs attend and make a point to sit where we don’t

know anyone. We also try to put someone new at the rabbi’s table. We let them know both by sending flyers home with the kids and by having membership services call each family. I know it’s been a success because we’re seeing some of these faces at other events, such as at a recent family fishing trip. That tells us they feel comfortable enough within the wider community to come and participate.”

— Dorrie Berkowitz, vice president of programming at Forest Hills Jewish Center, Queens, New York, 700 households

Keruv concerns all of us, and many other synagogues are starting or expanding both their thinking and programming. Town & Village in Manhattan, for example, has attracted a regular crowd of unaffiliated young adults with Friday-night Synaplex programs that have featured comedy, Indian food, and wine tastings. T&V has also partnered with neighboring congregations Brotherhood and East End Temple to produce joint advertising, as well as events for teens and adult singles. Young Israel of New Rochelle recently received a grant from the Orthodox Union for its proposal to confront assimilation in the Jewish community. Called Inreach and Outreach, Young Israel plans to assemble learning, Shabbat service, event-planning, marketing, and financial teams, each of which will have its own outreach activities. The experiences of these synagogues and the rewards they’ve found in “drawing near those who are far” can serve as excellent models for Jewish leadership.

— Elinor Nauen is a freelance writer in New York and a member of Town & Village Synagogue.



DRU GREENWOOD

from the director...

Shalom friends,

The mitzvah of *ahavat ger*, to love the stranger, is mentioned more often than any other in the Torah, some say 36 times. And as you can see from the words of some of our contemporary New York teachers shared in these pages, the conversation continues across time to today.

Why is Jewish tradition so insistent that we should love the stranger, know the heart of the stranger, treat him or her as one of the home-born, and, like the Holy One, provide for each one bread and clothing, literally or figuratively — the sustenance of Torah and the covering of tallit? Perhaps, like the constant reminders my kids used to need to close the back door behind themselves, we have a hard time remembering let alone loving the stranger when other matters seem more immediately pressing. The stranger is by definition so ... strange, so other.

This issue of SYNERGY: *UJA-Federation of New York and Synagogues Together* focuses on *keruv*, drawing near those who are far, welcoming the stranger, seeking

to enable all who are hungry for community to find a home in our synagogues.

First, of course, we need to know who are the strangers among us. Jennifer Rosenberg points to three groups of people, identified in the *Jewish Community Study of New York: 2002*, who are underrepresented among synagogue members. Jason Lieberman and Rabbi Dianne Cohler-Esses ask us to consider those with disabilities and their families who may all too easily feel estranged.

Then we need to reach out to them. The lead article by Elinor Nauen highlights a few of the exemplary *keruv* efforts currently underway in New York synagogues, to spark your thinking. The Mystery Shul Shopper Checklist may give you some ideas for enhancing your outreach as well. And please consider now how your *kehillah* might join others throughout New York on the weekend of *Shabbat Mishpatim* — Friday, February 1, through Sunday, February 3, 2008 — to highlight the need for inclusion of those with disabilities and begin to act to draw them close. It is heartening that this communitywide action for *keruv* will be sponsored by UJA-Federation's Partners in Caring, the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation of New York, the New York Board of Rabbis, the Orthodox Union, the Union for Reform Judaism, and United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

The frontispiece of the Reform *machzor* includes these words from Exodus *Rabbah* 19:4:

"No stranger need lodge in the street" (Job 31:32). The Holy One does not reject a single creature. Rather, all are acceptable to God.

The gates are open at all times, and all who wish may enter.

At this time of *cheshbon hanefesh*, reflection and renewal, may the promise of *ahavat ger* bring us ever closer to one another. May you, your loved ones, and the *kehillot* you lead be inscribed for blessing in the new year.

Dru Greenwood

Dru Greenwood
Director of Synagogue Renewal

*V'Shachanti b'toch b'nai Yisrael.
And I will dwell within the
children of Israel.*

— Parshat Tetzaveh, Exodus 29:45

The Talmud asks, "If a priest performing a ritual sacrifice while standing in the Tent of Meeting pokes his head outside, would the sacrifice still be valid?" The answer given is no, because the priest has to be completely within the Tent.

— Talmud, *Zevachim* 26a

Many Jews today are not completely within the tent of the Jewish community, and we struggle with the question of how to bring them in. While the *Ohel* of our community is a very big tent with numerous entrances and with room for everyone who wants to enter, some will enter only part way, poking their heads in from time to time. When a *ben* or *bat Yisrael* stands at the threshold, we must be ready to offer a way into the tent that honors their needs, for God dwells within each and every one. When we bring Jews into community, we welcome God in as well.

— Rabbi Elliot Skiddell is rabbi of Reconstructionist Congregation Beth Emeth in Hewlett.

God says, “If you keep far off those who are far, you will end by making far off those who are near.” God brings near the far, and supports the far as well as the near. And not only that, but God offers peace to the far even before the near, as it is said, “Peace, peace to the far and the near.”

— Numbers Rabbah 8

According to this midrash, *keruv* — drawing near those who are far — is a Godly act, one that is at the heart of outreach and synagogue membership efforts. Of course, inviting conversion, supporting the partner who is not Jewish yet is raising Jewish children, and encouraging lifelong membership in our congregations all, in some way, “bring near those who are or have been far.”

But our sages expand on and reinforce the urgency of this mitzvah. They warn us, “If you do not bring near those who are far, you will end by keeping far those who

are near.” Reform Jewish sends an open welcome to interfaith couples. Not only do we welcome the Jewish partner, who we may see as “near to us,” but we also welcome the partner who is not Jewish, who is relatively speaking “far from us.” If we hadn’t welcomed them, we surely would have kept many Jewish partners far from us!

Practicing the mitzvah of *keruv* is also crucial in our sacred communities. The same energy, skills, and sensitivity we use to attract the unaffiliated — those who are far — to our congregations will enable us

to sustain and support community for those who are already members — those who are near.

Dedication to this mitzvah brings blessing upon blessing from those who join us on our journey — Jews, Jews by choice, and those partners and seekers who are not Jewish. Where but in our synagogues can the real work of *keruv* be better accomplished — every day, face to face, one person at a time?

— Kathryn Kahn is director of the William and Lottie Daniel Department of Outreach and Membership at the Union for Reform Judaism.

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Families with “normal” children of the same age invite one another over so children can play and adults can talk, but my family has not yet been figured into that equation. This is not malicious, and it actually, on some level, makes sense — my son, at this point, does not know how to play appropriately with his peers. But it yields the unwitting exclusion of our family from certain webs of connection. This exclusion can be painful for families like mine who yearn for their community to be their home, despite disabilities, despite differences, despite discomfort.

How do we, as a Jewish community, begin to address the inescapable fact of strangeness in our midst? Religiously, this is a crucial question. The Jewish system of mitzvot, one

can say, turns on the axis of memory, the memory that we were, each one of us, strangers in a strange land. As it is written in Deuteronomy 10:19, “And you shall love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” With this injunction, turn to the strangers in your midst, and you, too, might be brought closer to the face of God.

— Rabbi Dianne Cohler-Esses is scholar-in-residence at UJA-Federation of New York.

Sign On for SYNERGY Updates

SYNERGY e-mails for presidents, rabbis, and executive directors of synagogues in New York, Westchester, and Long Island provide timely information about grant opportunities, conferences designed for synagogue leaders, and a variety of community resources that benefit synagogues. The new UJA-Federation Campership program that enabled 21 synagogues to send 300 kids to Jewish overnight camp was announced only by SYNERGY e-mail. Reminders for upcoming Alban Institute Synagogue Leadership Development workshops will come to you by SYNERGY e-mail.

If you are not receiving SYNERGY e-mails and would like to do so, please forward your name, position, synagogue name and address, and e-mail address to Dru Greenwood at greenwood@ujafedny.org. Stay in touch!

The Lord protects the stranger.

— Psalms 146:9

While embracing the tenet of marriage within the faith, Conservative Judaism acknowledges the significance of intermarriage among our people. With our response to intermarriage, Conservative synagogues have the extraordinary opportunity to perform an exceptional mitzvah: the act of bringing the life-affirming joy of Jewish living to those who are not currently living as Jews. Manifesting *keruv*, bringing close, in our interactions with non-Jewish spouses of Jewish individuals is the first step in this mitzvah, as *keruv* informs us that we must neither reject nor ignore either partner, but rather be welcoming and open to both.

However, *keruv* is just the start. To yield an affirming result — the willingness of both marriage partners to embrace Judaism, to make a Jewish home and raise Jewish children — the principle of *edud* — encouragement, support, and inspiration — is essential. Through *edud*, we can personalize and personify all that is joyous, meaningful, and spiritually elevating about Judaism, our culture, and our practices. It is through *edud* that Conservative Judaism has the power to transmit the very essence of what it means to be Jewish and to live Jewishly. And therein resides a great mitzvah for all.

— Bruce F. Greenfield is director of the metropolitan New York region of United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

Demographic Groups Underrepresented in Synagogues

In 2002, 43 percent of all eight-county New York Jewish households reported they belong to a synagogue, a slight increase in comparison with 1991, when it was 38 percent. There is a strong correlation between synagogue membership and income, marital status, and intermarriage status.

Income: Less-affluent households are less likely to belong to a synagogue; 37 percent of Jewish households with annual incomes of less than \$50,000 belong to a synagogue, compared with 57 percent of Jewish households with incomes of at least \$150,000.

Marital Status: Households in which the respondent is not married are less likely than married households to belong to a synagogue (34 percent of nonmarried households; 51 percent of married households), with divorced respondents having the lowest synagogue membership rates.

Intermarriage Status: Synagogue membership is particularly low among the intermarried — only one in six intermarried households belongs to a synagogue (16 percent), in comparison with 62 percent of in-married households.

Percent of Jewish Households That Belong to a Synagogue, by Income, Marital Status, and Intermarriage Status Eight-County New York Area, 2002

	Percent of Households That Report Belonging to a Synagogue
All Households: 2002	43%
Annual Household Income	
Under \$50,000	37%
\$50,000 – \$99,999	39%
\$100,000 – \$149,999	45%
Over \$150,000	57%
Marital Status	
Married	51%
Widowed	37%
Never Married	33%
Divorced	29%
In-married or Intermarried Status	
In-married	62%
Intermarried	16%

Prepared by Jennifer Rosenberg, director of research at UJA-Federation of New York, from *The Jewish Community Study of New York: 2002*.

Focus: Including Those With Disabilities

Jason Lieberman

In December 1948, in the aftermath of the Holocaust, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Thus began the movement for inclusion of individuals with disabilities. Throughout the late 1970s and 1980s, the major movements within Judaism began wrestling with how to create more inclusive synagogue communities. Individual synagogues, often spurred by specific requests from personally affected leaders, began to build ramps or offer large-print prayer books. However, systemic change lagged behind, and individuals and families affected by disabilities, who already felt marginalized, frequently chose not

to affiliate with their neighborhood synagogue. In 1990, passage of the Americans With Disabilities Act propelled the United States into a new era, yet exempted religious institutions from compliance with the general mandate to provide reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities. Nevertheless, the momentum to build inclusive synagogue communities has continued to grow.

Today, as Jews of all persuasions search for compassionate and embracing communities, nagging questions — personal, communal, and religious — remain. On a personal level, when faced with an individual with a disability, how do we feel and react? What might

we learn about ourselves and our community if we worked harder to include people with disabilities? How would we look at the world differently if consciously we began to use the lens suggested in Genesis 1:27, that all human beings are created in the image of God?

Think about your own *kehillah*. Might families with children or adults with disabilities feel excluded or alienated in your community? How can you find out? Are you willing to talk with families that have disabled members, or perhaps invite them to your home for Shabbat to learn more about what they are seeking in an inclusive community? Are children with disabilities welcome in your synagogue's

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלֶיךָ וְאָתָם יְדַעְתָּם אֶת־נַפְשׁ הַגֵּר כִּי־גֵרִים הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם

And you shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, since you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

SAVE THE DATE

The Whole Community: Welcoming in Those With Disabilities

Shabbat Across New York **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1 – SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2008**

— Exodus 23:9

Join with synagogues throughout the New York metropolitan area on this unique Shabbat weekend to promote inclusion of the special-needs community through learning, volunteer opportunities, and celebration.

To learn more and begin planning for your congregation's participation, an inclusion workshop will take place at UJA-Federation of New York on **Tuesday, October 9, 2007, from 12:00 noon to 2:30 p.m.**

Registration for the workshop is essential. Please contact Alex Roth-Kahn, Caring Commission planning executive, at 1.212.836.1762 or roth-kahna@ujafedny.org by Tuesday, October 2nd, to confirm your attendance.

Sponsored by

UJA-Federation's Partners in Caring Initiative / New York Board of Rabbis / Orthodox Union / Reconstructionist Jewish Federation of Metropolitan New York / Union for Reform Judaism, Greater New York Council and Department of Jewish Family Concerns / United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, Metropolitan New York Region

children's service? What about in an adult service? Are adults with disabilities fully integrated into services and synagogue activities? What resources does a synagogue need to ensure that every family and each individual member is included as much as possible?

How can we welcome those who have felt like strangers?

Now is the time for inclusion to become a priority. It is for this reason that on the weekend of Friday, February 1, to Sunday, February 3, *Shabbat Mishpatim*, UJA-Federation of New York's Partners in Caring, an initiative to help strengthen synagogues as caring, inspired and compassionate communities — with the sponsorship of the New York Board of Rabbis, the Union for Reform Judaism, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, the Reconstructionist Jewish Federation of New York, and the Orthodox Union — invites your synagogue to join in a Shabbat of inclusion. During this Shabbat weekend, join synagogues across the metropolitan New York area to offer special programming, learning, and volunteer opportunities aimed at promoting inclusion within our synagogues. The weekend will provide an opportunity to ask these questions and begin to take next steps in creating meaningful change.

— Jason Lieberman is an intern at UJA-Federation of New York, working toward an M.P.A. in public and nonprofit management and policy at The Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service at New York University. Diagnosed with cerebral palsy spastic diplegia at the age of 11 months, Jason is now a sought-after public speaker and advocate on behalf of those with disabilities.

Reflections

Particularly the stranger in all her or his difference, ... because we were strangers in Egypt, deserves special goodness for life or at least until the end of strangeness.

— Grace Paley, "A Midrash on Happiness"

Rabbi Dianne Cohler-Esses

My son, Eli, almost 6 years old, has significant impairment. These differences are not of the bodily variety — there is no external disfigurement. In fact, Eli is a most beautiful child. Rather, it is the sort of impairment that manifests developmentally, behaviorally, and socially. Some of these differences are quite charming and not so personally challenging. When my son, for example, meets someone named John, he, a Beatles lover, will ask them, "Are you John Lemon?" (He means John Lennon.) Others are interesting: "When will be the end of Eli?" he asks often, preoccupied with death. "Is this the beginning of Eli, the middle of Eli, or the end of Eli?"

But there are other moments that don't allow me to be so closeted from — and in denial of — my son's disabilities, times when I feel like cringing and wish the floor would swallow me up. Like when he begins to rock back and forth for no apparent reason in public; or when he touches another child inappropriately, not understanding the impact of his touch. These are the differences I am ashamed of. These are the differences that I wish would go away — not only for his sake, but for my and my family's.

A traditional Jew and a rabbi, I continually search sacred text for support and guidance in how to deal

with the difficult fact of my son's disabilities. Why did this happen to him, to us as a family? To those questions, I find no answer. Certain sacred narratives, however, allow me to shift from "Why me?" to "How do I understand this?" What narrative frames can I use to live productively and meaningfully with this fact of our lives? The primary and most relevant teaching I find is that we are all created in the image of God. Eli then, according to Genesis 1:27, is, exactly as he is, a reflection of the Divine Creator. In fact, his full name, Elichai, means "my God is living." Indeed, the more comfortable I become with my son's "different" behavior, the more I come to understand another aspect — another, so to speak, face of God. From a divine perspective, each person with all their abilities and disabilities, reflects God as much as any other person does.

There is a human perspective as well, however, and it is not always as forgiving. As powerful and transformative as these texts are, our community does not yet embody the values these texts reflect. For many parents of children with disabilities, community can become the very occasion for pain and exclusion. However, this is not because others mean to exclude. To give a personal example, there are no other children in my synagogue community who would, at this point, naturally seek out a play date with my son.

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Kol Yisrael areivim zeh bazeh. Every Jew is responsible for the other. — Talmud, *Shavout* 39a

All will agree that the synagogue is a place meant to be open to all Jews. The Hebrew word for synagogue is *beit hakeneset*, which means a place of gathering. In Hebrew, a *kenisah* is an entry way. The synagogue must be a portal for all Jews to engage their heritage and community at their own level.

It is in this spirit that *keruv*, or outreach, is a most important concept. Religiously, there are several mitzvot, or commandments, that require such behavior. There is the

mitzvah of *v'ahavta l'rei'acha kamocho*, to love your neighbor. There is the mitzvah of teaching Torah and the principle of instructing fellow Jews in the right way to practice Judaism. Some commentaries have even suggested that the mitzvah of returning lost objects, *hashavat aveidah*, includes the idea of returning a Jew to tradition.

In the end, however, it is natural to keep our doors open and even proactively go out to bring Jews in. My brother describes outreach as

being the “arms of a synagogue.” The arms are used to physically reach out to embrace things, just as outreach is used to bring in those who may not have a strong connection to Judaism. But the arms are also essential limbs, without which we are handicapped.

We must never forget that reaching out is not just something extra. It is very much who we are and what our synagogues must do.

— Rabbi Elie Weinstock is associate rabbi of Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun in Manhattan.

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Caring for those in need, rescuing those in harm's way, and renewing and strengthening the Jewish people in New York, in Israel, and around the world.

Mystery Shul Shopper Checklist

The leadership of every congregation considers its synagogue to be warm and welcoming. How welcoming are you really to a first-time visitor? Invite a friend to visit your synagogue as a Mystery Shul Shopper and report back. (Even considering which items below are important to your board or membership committee, thinking about what needs to be added, and assessing your success are steps in the right direction.) This tool is adapted and reprinted here with permission from the William and Lottie Daniel Department of Outreach and Membership at the Union for Reform Judaism.

First Impressions: Over the Telephone and On the Web

- | | yes | no |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. The person who answers the telephone responds in a welcoming manner and makes each caller feel important. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. The synagogue has a 24-hour emergency number, given out by answering service or machine and posted on the website. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. If the congregation uses voice mail or an automated system: | | |
| a. Callers do not need to hear an entire message to get to the directory or reach a person. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. If the person the caller is trying to reach is not available, the voice mail instructs the caller as to the next step. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. If the congregation has an automated system, thought has been put into making the system easily navigable by a first-time caller. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. The information given out regarding worship times, school closings, or other timely information is current. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. The website opens with a message of welcome. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Contact information for clergy and staff is easy to find on the website. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Information on the website is current. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

First Impressions: In Person

- | | yes | no |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. The synagogue has a well-lit sign, making it easy to spot. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. There is an outdoor sign directing people to the correct entry. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Weekly Shabbat and holiday worship service times are prominently listed. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. There is a sense of attention to security. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. The grounds are tidy and well kept. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Once Inside

- | | yes | no |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Once a person enters the building, it is easy to find the offices, sanctuary, or school. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Office hours and event schedules are posted. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. There is a comfortable waiting area for visitors to the temple office or for people waiting to see the rabbi. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please turn over

- | | yes | no |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4. Office personnel are friendly and helpful. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. There are pictures of members throughout the building. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Jewish values are represented in the building; for example, a <i>tzedakah</i> box is in the foyer. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. The hallways are well lit and clean. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Displays are well maintained and current. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

On Shabbat

- | | yes | no |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. You are greeted as you enter the building. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. You are greeted as you enter the sanctuary. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. People sitting near you introduce themselves to you. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. During services, the rabbi asks congregants to wish their neighbors <i>Shabbat shalom</i> . | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. If a newcomer, you are asked to stand to introduce yourself and be welcomed during services. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Clergy, leadership, or members engage you in conversation during the <i>Oneg</i> . | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. You are introduced to other synagogue members during the <i>Oneg</i> and are not left alone. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. There is a <i>Shabbat shalom</i> table reserved for visitors or new members that is hosted by synagogue members. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Your contact information is collected. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

General Impressions

1. Do you feel as though you would consider joining this synagogue? Why or why not?
2. What three words or phrases would you use to describe the synagogue?
3. What three words or phrases would you use to describe your experience as a visitor?
4. Having spent time in the building and looking around, what are your impressions?
5. Do you think the impression the congregation tries to convey in its materials and on its website match the reality of your experience? If no, why not?
6. Please list your perception of the congregation's greatest strengths?
7. Areas for improvement?
8. Do you have other recommendations for synagogue leadership to consider?