



Frequently Asked Questions about Co-location Updated March 2019

THE BASICS

What is Co-location?

- Co-location literally means that ST and 1st U would occupy a shared physical space. Creating some of that space would involve remodeling the current building at 3400 Dupont Avenue South. It is important to keep in mind that co-location is not synonymous with nor a euphemism for “merger”
- It is anticipated that with the exception of clergy offices, most or all space in the building would be available for shared use. The remodeling is expected to include a new and additional sanctuary space on the new third floor of the educational wing. ST and 1st U would have priority use in their own sanctuaries
- The board expects that an operating agreement would be created with 1st U and Shir Tikvah which would, among other things, spell out a conflict resolution procedure where the parties would have equal power

What does it mean to be “leaning in”?

- “Leaning in” means that co-location is the only option that Shir Tikvah is currently expending energy and resources to explore. The board voted to exclusively explore this option in August based on the two-year detailed exploration of three options: to add on to our current building, buy another space, or co-locate. In terms of opportunity and feasibility, the board deemed co-location to be the best option. It is important to note that we are engaging in this exploration with our potential co-location partners without the sense that we will abandon it if we “find something better.” If, however, we discover irreconcilable differences, we will stop moving forward
- Leaning in also means a willingness to shift our perspective, challenge narratives about what is “ours” (including ones founded in our collective history of trauma), and re-ground ourselves in a vision of our community's future that embraces new circumstances, growth, and evolution

How do the members and leadership at 1st U view co-location?

- Rather than paraphrase 1st U's thinking, here are their words: “As people of faith, we are called to live and act out of a prophetic imagination about what is possible as we strive to heal the world and build the Beloved Community”
- “Both of our congregations share commitments to racial justice, ending white supremacy culture, environmental stewardship, and creating spaces that reflect our values and dedication to the community. As a shared house of worship, 3400 Dupont becomes a model for the partnering, collaboration, and new ways of being we hope to see in the world”

HOW AND WHY DID THE BOARD DECIDE TO LEAN IN?

How did the ST Board arrive at choosing co-location vs remodeling 1360 MP?

- There was a two year discernment process with the Board including three options - renovate our building, find a new building, and co-locate. The results of that process (including financial details) are available [here](#) (the 2017 Facilities Assessment Group report) and [here](#) (the updated October 2018 congregational presentation)

What makes Co-location a terrific idea?

Many of these important and valid questions on this list come from our fears of maintaining our Jewishness and our 'Shir-Tikvah-ness' in a different container. In the years leading up to the decision to lean in to co-location, the Board has found many reasons for excitement alongside all of the essential logistical questions. Here are a few reasons for enthusiasm that have sustained us through this process:

- In a world of heartache and division, the conversation of co-location between Shir Tikvah and First Universalist is a healing balm. In our dialogue together, we center compassion, human dignity, and justice. Together, we address the moral scourges of racism, anti-Semitism, and white supremacy as we seek to write a new narrative in Minneapolis, a new story of hope, integrity, and two distinct congregations working to build a strong and just community
- The "fear" voiced about our losing our Jewish identity is precisely reason we should do it—as a defiant radical act of courage that we won't be erased; to show the world that two cultures can co-exist in close proximity without losing their identity; in fact, each would be strengthened by the exposure to different belief systems and different ways of doing things
- We will be able to design and build our own distinctively Jewish sanctuary: spiritual space not physical space, complete with symbols, artifacts, and meaning which sings forth our Jewish identity
- There is a spiritual feel to 3400 Dupont Avenue, where Jews worshipped close to 100 years ago. The sense of history makes us part of something special; it is a building with which we Jews have had a long-term relationship, and our synergy with 1st U on issues regarding social justice
- We will leave a smaller ecological footprint in this world
- It is a financially smart decision
- After much work, it is the most promising path for addressing the access concerns and crowding concerns in our current building and thus living into our commitment to radical hospitality

I know there have been updates from leadership about what's going on, but I can't find them. Where are they?

- There's a new page on our website collecting many of the congregational communications. You can find it [here](#). There you will see the monthly congregational letter updates from the Board President, earlier reports, and some information from First Universalist.

In what ways is ST exploring the questions and concerns around Co-location?

- There is currently a number of work groups exploring the critical questions we need answered in order to make a decision about moving forward with Co-location. These are identified here, along with their chairs/co-chairs but not their members, and they are:
 - ST Steering Committee: Bruce Manning, Jeremy Pierotti, Rabbi Latz
 - Joint Steering Committee: the ST Steering Committee plus Rev. Jen Crow and 1st U Board member Cindy Marsh
 - Architecture working group: co-chairs Sara Rothholz Weiner, Ho-Youl Chang.
 - Legal Analysis and Financial Foundations: co-chairs Howard Orenstein, Amy Funk
 - Calendar working group: Michael Simon
 - Operating costs working group: co-chairs Jane Binder, Jeff Danovsky
 - Communications and Congregational Engagement: co-chairs Ray Anshel, MJ Gilbert, Abbie Shain
 - Jewish identity and spirituality: co-chairs John Walthour, Tamar Ghidalia
 - Delivering youth education: co-chairs Barry Epstein and Aaron Lichtov
 - Capital campaign: co-chairs: Jeff Danovsky, Anne Trockman, Luke Weisberg

How will this final decision be made? A congregational decision? A Board decision?

- Representatives of the committee are currently working on what a process of collective discernment will look like. As that process develops, more information will be forthcoming to the congregation. For now, if you have thoughts, ideas, feelings, and ideas to share, please email sthopesanddreams@gmail.com

Is there a specific date by which we need to decide whether to Co-locate or not?

- There is no firm, final date by which we need to make this decision. What we are imagining is a date sometime in May/June 2019. The committees noted above are all working to ensure as timely a date as possible. As you might imagine, there are many moving pieces to this process. Come May/June we may have a Memorandum of Understanding in place with formal contracts to be signed later. We may also, in agreement with 1st U, agree on a longer time frame

HOW WILL THIS ACTUALLY WORK?

Will there be additional/new spaces at 3400 Dupont?

- Yes! There will be a new worship space that is primarily for our use, with movable seating that will seat 400, as well as other potentially new or redesignated spaces (classrooms, offices) in the renovation. With the renovation, the balcony in the current sanctuary and the Arches room between the two towers will become accessible to all for the first time

Will both ST and 1st U have access to all spaces at 3400 Dupont?

- Our understanding, shared by 1st U, is that both ST and 1st U will have access to one another's spaces; for example, we may have events for which their sanctuary best fits our needs (as has been the case in the past) and our sanctuary may be one that they wish to use as well. Our intention is that with the exception of sanctuaries, most of the spaces at 3400 Dupont will not be neatly ST's or 1st U's. They will be *ours*. And to the extent that certain spaces *may* be for the primary use of one or the other congregation, we will share those spaces with each other as possible. An operating agreement will be drafted to address uses and priorities, but we will always have our sanctuary on our worship days

What would ST's worship space be like at 3400 Dupont? Would we/could we use their sanctuary?

- We don't know what the space would actually look like yet because architectural plans have not yet been created. We are committed to a space with movable seating that supports multiple worship formats, including circular worship. We would most likely be able to use 1st U's sanctuary for special events when many would attend. Details are currently be explored

What would be the impact of co-location on our Jewish cultural and spiritual identity?

- There is no simple way to answer this question nor is this space ample enough to do it justice. It is also why we have a group dedicated to exploring this question, co-chaired by John Walthour and Tamar Ghidalia. What we can say now is because we are a congregation that has a strong sense of self, a strong sense of what is contained in having a Jewish identity, and a strong sense of what it means to enact a full and robust Jewish spiritual life, it is our commitment to live a vital, creative, unapologetic, and joyful Jewish life
- We are committed to the notion that co-location is not a diminution of that commitment but rather an expression of it. We are committed to this idea in much the same way that congregations in Ann Arbor,

Vail, Omaha, and our very own Spring House Ministries are committed to it and whose co-located congregations have thrived and have retained their own religious vision while being under one roof

Will 1st U still refer to the building as a church? Will we be able to call it a synagogue?

- Shir Tikvah will still be a synagogue. 1st Unitarian Church will still be a church. Those designations refer to our congregations, not the building in which we meet (Shir Tikvah has not always met in a building built as a synagogue). What the redesigned building will be called is yet to be decided

What about the kitchen? How will we decide who gets to use it when? Will 1st U have pork and shellfish in the building?

- While the details are yet to be negotiated, we expect that 1st U will be respectful of our practices and beliefs and that we will find ways to accommodate both parties' needs

Will 1st U be our landlord?

- No. We will be co-owners. We are currently exploring a model where a third non-profit entity would be formed (we have tentatively named this entity "Love Wins") that would own and maintain the building. 1st U and ST would each own shares in this new non-profit, and there would be a Board with an equal number of ST and 1st U members. This will be a shared enterprise in as many aspects as possible. This idea is very much still in development and may not be the direction we ultimately go if we co-locate

When would we actually co-locate?

- It will be a matter of years. First, after careful and appropriate information gathering, sharing, and deliberation, there has to be a decision to co-locate.. Then we have to fundraise. Then we have to build/remodel part of the existing space. As best as we can imagine this process, the earliest we could co-locate is in 2021

HOW WILL CO-LOCATION IMPACT OUR FAMILIES?

Will religious school continue on Sundays?

- We will not be able to have Sunday School on Sunday mornings at 3400 Dupont Avenue because we know that 1st U uses all of the classroom spaces until 2 p.m. Sunday afternoons. This structure is a core part of how they practice their religious commitments and build their community. We have not asked them to alter that. Instead, a new team (comprised of Aaron Lichtov, Barry Epstein, Abby Fenton, Jennie Teichman, Tamara Rhodes, Dana Bennis, Gayle Zoffer, along with Inclusion & Wellness Coordinator Raena Davison, Director of Youth Education and Programming Forrest Yesnes, and Director of Lifelong Learning Rabbi Debra Rappaport) has formed to begin asking the big questions about Jewish education. We are excited about all the possibilities, in time and space, in which our students and

families can be engaged in whole-person Jewish learning which is meaningful, joyous, and organically connected with the Jewish cycles of time.

Our next listening session is April 14.

Will my kids have to see Christmas trees and decorations around when they come to services in December?

- Specific decisions about decoration of shared spaces have not been made, and matters like this will be part of the day to day and year to year engagement the two congregations have as our relationships deepen. That engagement has already begun, including helping the folks at 1st U understand the sensitivities and historical trauma that informs our reactions to Christian cultural symbols. The ways we conduct these conversations over time, and the policies that result from those conversations, will be the work of the long-term relationship that co-location will bring us into

WHAT IF???

Is there a fail-safe to co-location should we reach irreconcilable differences?

- Should we reach a point where our leaning-in process results in a decision that co-location is not the direction we want to take, we will revisit the other options that the Facilities Assessment Group originally considered and re-engage the process of discernment as to what the best alternatives are for moving forward. While we are in this leaning-in process, those considerations are on the back burner but we will continue to maintain our current building in such a way that it is safe and functional (within the constraints that make us consider new space in the first place)

What happens if in 5 years ST or 1st U need more space?

- The two congregations enter into this partnership in good faith and with ongoing conversation about how the relationship can continue to meet our needs. While the plans we are making take future expectations into account, there is change that we cannot plan for. We will continue to work as partners as to resolve issues as they arise, recognizing that our doing so is not just "business" but rather the spiritual and political healing work of this partnership
- We anticipate that the legal agreements between 1st U and ST will support partnership by including, for example, a commitment that neither party may take any action that would threaten the existence of the other

What if holidays other than Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur fall on Sunday or on one of 1st U's holidays? And would we be able to use the building on Christian holidays (e.g. Christmas Eve movie night)

- While it is impossible to account for unforeseen contingencies, we anticipate a relationship in which we work to accommodate each other's scheduling needs. We also anticipate that the new building will allow both congregations to hold functions at the same time. As a point of information, Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur never fall on a Sunday (the designers of the Jewish calendar were, indeed, a forward thinking group)

HOW WILL CO-LOCATION IMPACT SHIR TIKVAH FINANCIALLY?

How will the money work?

- The specifics have not yet been decided, but there will be an operating and governance agreement that details each party's financial obligations, maintenance of the building, etc.

What is the cost or cost savings of co-location?

- Our Operating Costs working group, co-chaired by Jane Binder and Jeff Danovsky, is looking carefully at Shir Tikvah's current expenses and what we anticipate our expenses will be if we move forward with co-location. The working group is working to determine in what areas co-location will save Shir Tikvah costs and in what areas our costs might increase. This analysis has only just begun. There will be more to report in the coming weeks
- Our charge is to look for creative ways to combine resources and share expenses with First Universalist to run the two congregations in the most efficient and cost-effective way for both entities

Will my annual dues/giving be going towards the 1st U building/congregation?

- To the extent that dues to the general fund go to supporting the maintenance and upkeep of the space we will be sharing, one could say that dues to ST will also benefit 1st U (it will not be "their building"; it will be OUR building, collectively). The same can be said for programming; we may share resources around social justice or activism, as well as Sanctuary or other joint initiatives. Given that the vast majority of the ST budget goes to pay our staff (Rabbis, educators, executive director, support staff), we can count on dues to continue to support the same core functions that they currently do

Will there be shared staff?

- We will have our own Rabbinic, educational and directorial staff, as has been the case. It is likely that in a shared space, maintenance and custodial staff might be shared. The question of whether other support functions might be shared is one that remains to be answered, but it is anticipated that core staff functions specific to the operation of our congregation will continue as they have