

All,

I'll borrow from a witticism Forrest Yesnes hung above his desk: *Shana Secular Tova!* This letter includes some information about our next steps as we prepare for John Humleker's well-deserved retirement **and** some updates on our rabbis' thinking and work on our lifelong learning and engagement program **and** information on "leaning in" to co-location with First Universalist **and** updates on our fundraising efforts.

John Humleker's retirement

I last [wrote you in November](#) about the board's work to prepare for John's retirement. Board member Ben Goldfarb, who has significant professional expertise in this area, has spent a good deal of time with John understanding the hundreds of things he does for us, how the job has grown and changed over his 15 years of service, and what he believes we will need to be successful in the future. Ben has also interviewed all of our full- and part-time staff and each of the rabbis to understand how their roles interact with John's work, what their needs are and what Shir Tikvah's growing needs look like to them. Out of this work, the Board has created a Hiring Committee which will work with the board to develop a job description and to do the work of finding a hire that is the best fit for the synagogue. Rabbi Latz, as the senior rabbi, will be deeply involved in the hiring decisions that we make. John was very professional and kind in giving us such advanced notice of his intentions, which is consistent with how he has always comported himself at Shir Tikvah. We're grateful to have him and look forward to celebrating him later this year. If you'd like to be involved in our planned celebration for John and all that he has done, please [email Sara](#). Save the date: June 30 at 7 pm at Shir Tikvah, more details to come!

***Talmud Torah*: Lifelong Learning**

I hope that you had a chance to review the early January email from Rabbi Rappaport presenting some of the amazing lifelong learning programs available to you at Shir Tikvah. If you missed it, please [contact the office](#) to request. Our staff does so much to offer us so much.

The vision statement for our education program, adopted in 2012, is:

Shir Tikvah will be a welcoming, sacred Jewish community of learners of every age, ability, perspective and background. Learners will engage in holy conversations about Torah, concepts of God, Judaism, Israel and relevant issues of today's world in all their exhilarating, challenging and profound forms. We will encounter innovative and flexible learning models in rhythm with Jewish holidays, life cycle events and Shabbat. Our learning will cultivate Jewish identity, build community and inspire us to live in harmony with our Jewish ethics.

Although co-location is the current impetus for some of the work I'm about to describe, as the vision statement above makes clear, we are always looking for innovative and flexible learning models in the rhythms of Jewish life, i.e. learning Jewish life by doing Jewish life as an inspiring

reflection of Shir Tikvah's values. All three of our amazing rabbis and our director of youth education and programming (the talented Forrest Yesnes) will be working with education leaders and congregants in evaluating our goals in our Sunday school education program—what is the best way to fulfill our overall lifelong learning and engagement mission—and whether and how we can meet those goals if Sunday school in the morning in our own building is not to be.

I want to emphasize the three points above. **First**, that we do a lot of education work across all ages, with stretched resources. **Second**, that we were—well before co-location—committed to innovative lifelong learning and engagement that is in sync with Jewish life. **Third**, that there is work being done now, and more will be coming, about Jewish education and Sunday school at Shir Tikvah.

Co-location at 3400 Dupont

We are “leaning in” to the possibilities of co-location at First Universalist. We are working with the intention to minimize or solve the concerns and obstacles while embracing the potential advantages of co-location for both congregations. We might succeed at this work and, as a congregation, decide to embrace co-location. We might not succeed, in which case we will continue our efforts to resolve the significant shortcomings of our current facility through renewed exploration of other options.

We have now created a new section on the Shir Tikvah website containing many of our communications on co-location. You can find it [here](#). You are invited to send your comments, concerns and sparks of enthusiasm to sthopesanddreams@gmail.com, an email address that is actively monitored though you won't necessarily get a personalized response; signed notes will be part of the discussion. Among other things in our co-location work,

- This month, we will have a joint retreat for Shir Tikvah and First Universalist lay leaders and staff as we more deeply dive into co-location.
- The joint Legal Affairs and Financial Foundations working group continues to delve into questions of how to arrange ourselves legally.
- The joint Architectural Program working group will connect with the staff at both organizations to more fully investigate their use of space and their needs.
- The Jewish Identity and Spirituality working group (which is not joint with First Universalist) has set their agenda and membership.
- Rabbi Latz will be preaching at First Universalist on Sunday, February 24th.

In short, there are a lot of people working hard “leaning in” to whether we will proceed with co-location and you will continue to get these regular updates.

Fundraising update

Whether we co-locate or not, we will need to strengthen the synagogue's financial base; as a congregation, our Jewish energy and our needs have stretched both our building and, at least as critically, our amazing staff. Our fundraising consultant, [Kim Snyder](#), continues to work with our campaign committee and with selected congregants and the Board will engage with her preliminary conclusions on a capital campaign in April. If you've met with her, thank you. If you are the winner of an [unclaimed lottery prize](#), please feel free to call John Humleker directly.

I am deeply proud of and grateful for the staff we support through [our contributions](#) and who support us through their work.

In hope,
Bruce Manning, Board President

