

All,

Did you know that for many years now Shir Tikvah has served as a temporary spiritual home for queer Israeli couples who come to the United States to finalize adoptions? Or that when we welcomed our most recent fathers at the end of April, the naming ceremonies for their twins were the 399th and 400th baby namings of Rabbi Latz's career? There are many moments that connect our present status as a leader of Twin Cities Jewish life to our past as an upstart *minyán*—and new 21st century babies blessed in our circle to our spiritual ancestors. The mix of inclusion, a Jewish ritual, a quiet family moment, and a connection to a hoped-for progressive Israel brings me a warm, slow smile most every time I think of it. I hope it does the same for you.

Annual meeting report

It was lovely to see more than a hundred of you at our Annual Meeting this past Sunday, May 5. Our building is stuffed with energy on any Sunday morning during the school year, and to sit with you and talk of the synagogue we love, as teachers worked and children bustled—upstairs, downstairs, across the street—was a special joy. Each of our rabbis spoke to us of their past year and their loving hopes for the year to come. Our 2019-20 budget passed, Luke Weisberg received the Radical Hospitality Award honoring his years of dedication to Shir Tikvah, we heard from the Racial Justice Task Force, and we elected Lillie Benowitz, Lyonel Norris, and Larry Silber to the Board for next year. It is a noteworthy milestone in our development as an institution to observe that Lillie has previously served on the Board, when she was the president of Shir Tikvah's youth group, STiFTY.

A new Executive Director!

I am pleased to report that after a lengthy process, including all-day interviews of two finalists, the [Hiring Committee](#) made a unanimous recommendation to the Board for our Executive Director position, which the Board accepted with gusto. I am even more pleased to report that she has accepted our offer. Because we are coordinating with her current employer about her transition, look for a special announcement soon. We do know that we'll have some time in June where both she and John Humleker will be in the office together, in order to smooth our transition after 15 steady years of John's leadership. As I noted earlier, each candidate in our strong initial pool was given an independent review by each committee member, we built consensus to get to the next step, and then did so again to choose among those with whom we did a teleconference interview, before selecting the finalists to spend the day with us. Thank you to everyone who helped in this process. Even as we anticipate our new arrival, we look forward to celebrating John on **June 30th at 4-7pm**. If you'd like to be a sponsor of this event in John's honor, please email [Barry Epstein](#) or [Jeff Danovsky](#).

Safety and Security Committee

On April 30th, you should have received an email from the Board's Safety and Security Committee. The Committee is chaired by congregant [Jeremy Kalin](#), linked to the Board by [Joel Zimmerman](#), and staffed by [John](#) and [Forrest](#). I encourage you to re-read the email (or to contact [Nikolina](#) if you need it re-sent) to get the full breadth of what we are working on. Shir Tikvah is committed to being a safe, welcoming congregation and holy community. We are proud of our commitment to radical hospitality and we know that includes the obligation to make us all feel safe and secure at Shir Tikvah.

At every step we are making sure these security steps advance our values, particularly recognizing that many congregants are apprehensive about having law enforcement in and around Shir Tikvah. We also have asked law enforcement to be partners in these values; Minneapolis Police and the Hennepin County Sheriff have agreed to be extra-vigilant for us while also not bringing uniformed officers into our space in routine circumstances.

We have a solid emergency plan, and we have good relationships with first responders and law enforcement. These partners are providing greater vigilance as outside events suggest doing so. The Safety and Security Committee has been quietly and diligently reviewing current plans, and updating key safety procedures with input of outside professionals, like the Jewish Community Relations Council and by retaining an experienced safety consultant who has already conducted a first-round security assessment of the building and who will be helping with focused training later this year. To get involved and support this work, [donate](#) and/or email [Jeremy](#) or [Joel](#) about volunteering.

Co-location exploration updates

An educational (and free) Unitarian Universalist 101 Workshop will be held for all Shir Tikvah members on **Monday, May 13** at 6:30 pm (at Shir Tikvah) with Pastors Justin Schroeder and Karen Hutt; click [here](#) for more info and to register.

At the Annual Meeting, we distributed “A statement of principles for the Joint Steering Committee.” The Joint Steering Committee is made up of a few Shir Tikvah and First Universalist leaders and it guides our exploratory work. You can find that document [here](#). This statement of principles for exploring co-location together was adopted by the Shir Tikvah board on April 4, 2019 and the First Universalist Board two weeks later. It posits that “co-location is a religious and spiritual project” and discusses the separate religious roots for each congregation that makes exploring this idea compelling. It also proposes four (at least, for now) central concepts driving the work: healing justice, incubator impact, Earth stewardship, and financial responsibility. In the context of those ideas, the Joint Steering Committee embraced working principles of consensus, inclusivity, transparency, listening and learning, patience, flexibility, and each maintaining our own congregation’s commitments to our own programming.

We are engaged in what one member referred to this Sunday as exploring “copacetic cohabitation.” (Note that the word “copacetic” may not have the Hebrew roots in *kol b’seder* that I’d long thought, as explained [here](#).) Or, as another member told me later, we are talking about making Shir Tikvah a place where “you don’t have to sit on the floor if you don’t want to.” Of course, the work we do is much more complicated than that! I want to thank Gay Greiter, Eli Kramer, Rachel Orzoff and Claude Riedel for getting involved in leadership roles in related aspects of this whole work just this past week.

Don’t forget, there’s a co-location [FAQ](#) on our website and we’ll always be glad to hear from you by [email](#).

In hope,
Bruce