

All,

In the past four weeks, I stood with easily more than a hundred Shir Tikvah members in solidarity with our Muslim siblings at the Dar al Farooq Islamic Center in Bloomington. I stuffed *hamentaschen* in my mouth in our sanctuary at a raucous radically queer Purim spiel. I joined more than a hundred Shir Tikvah and First Unitarian members for Shabbat services and dinner. All of those things are Shir Tikvah. Also profoundly Shir Tikvah: quiet moments of prayer and reflection, gentle melodies from our Ashkenazi and Mizrahi traditions, the *simcha* of a *bat mitzvah* or a baby naming, the words shared on a Friday night at the *yahrzeit* of a loved one. For these and many other things—created because you make the *minyan*, because your presence creates our community—I am grateful.

The search for a new Executive Director

The [Hiring Committee](#) was thrilled to have a strong pool of candidates to review, from coast to coast and many from right here in Minnesota. Each committee member independently evaluated candidates using a scoring rubric drawn from the [job description](#) and then we reached consensus decisions on narrowing the candidate pool for the next stage. We are now working through the first round of video interviews, also each using our own rubric for assessing responses, and we hope to have consensus on our top candidate(s). The Hiring Committee will be reporting to and working with the Executive Committee and the Board on the next steps. So far, we remain on track for our goal making an offer to the right candidate before John Humleker retires. We look forward to celebrating John on **June 30th at 4pm**. If you'd like to be a lead sponsor of this event in John's honor, please email [Barry Epstein](#) or [Jeff Danovsky](#).

Rabbinical contracts

Just a reminder of the good news from an email blast I sent in mid-March: we have extended all of our rabbinical contracts! Our three rabbis lead us from their three different traditions, and we are ever the richer for it. Rabbi Latz was trained in the Reform movement, Rabbi Rappaport in the Reconstructionist movement, and Rabbi Lekach-Rosenberg at the post-denominational Hebrew College. What a thrill to know they'll be leading us for years to come.

Racial Justice Task Force

As I wrote you [last month](#), the Board has adopted the Racial Justice Task Force's statement of purpose and principles. We've now posted it and you can review and learn from it [here](#). If you're curious about First Universalist's congregational efforts in this area, click [here](#).

Co-location exploration updates

As I wrote [last month](#), as part of our continued co-location exploration, both the First Universalist board and Shir Tikvah board have determined to focus on a third-party entity model to hold the property and manage it, while each organization continues independently. The boards have also committed to developing an equal and consensus decision-making process for the potential third-party entity. The joint Legal Analysis and Financial Foundations team is working on this and related tasks.

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. A similar program, Judaism on [One Foot](#) (my working title) will be presented for First Universalist on Sunday, April 14. And if you want to know more about your own tradition, check out the remaining excellent Sparks classes we are running this month [here](#) (April 15: European Jews encounter modernity; April 22: Response to Modernity: Evolution of the Movements).

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

Not strictly co-location related

Our work with consultant [Kim Snyder](#) on assessing and strengthening our fundraising capacity is ongoing. Whether we co-locate or not, Shir Tikvah needs a stronger financial base to serve our mission and growing community.

Parents, caregivers, and grandparents are invited to a youth education listening session on **Sunday, April 14** from 9:45 to 11:15 am. Teachers in our programs will have a lunch-and-listen later that day.

Annual meeting

I look forward to seeing you at our annual meeting, **Sunday, May 5** at 9:30 am. We will enjoy seeing each other, approve the budget for next year, vote on the slate of board members, and present the Jim & Andrea Rubenstein Radical Hospitality Award. We also will share/summarize where we are on co-location so far.

In hope,
Bruce

