

Update and FAQ About Our Facilities Work

(Summer 2019)

What facilities do we need to do our work in the world? We need a building that feels **Jewish** and is **accessible, eco-friendly** and in an urban location; it should **hold our growing congregation**, have **big windows** and **sufficient classrooms and worship space**.

What options have we considered? Three options: (1) purchasing or renting new space for our exclusive use; (2) remodeling our current space; (3) co-locating. Our realtor did not identify appealing spaces for (1). We examined (2) in depth and concluded that while our current building (built as a Unitarian church!) has come to feel Jewish, with big windows, it would cost \$8+ million to make it meet the rest of our needs. We are now working hard to see if co-location with First Universalist at 3400 Dupont Ave. S, Mpls, will work.

What is the co-location concept? Shir Tikvah and First Universalist would jointly occupy 3400 Dupont, but expanded and remodeled. We would remain separate entities. We would be equals and make consensus decisions about the building and its operations. We would add a third floor to the education wing (south end), build our own new sanctuary (soaring ceilings, more seats, space for our coats, books and *tallitot*), and, through sharing of the entirety of 3400 Dupont, have the space we need, including many gender inclusive restrooms, elevator access, dedicated disabled parking, sufficient classrooms, other meeting spaces, offices for our staff, greater storage, and a larger kitchen—all to serve our mission of Jewish study and life, on a welcoming shared campus.

Will it serve our vision? Yes! Co-location of two **thriving** and **still independent** religious communities could model healing justice and a new kind of partnership in a fracturing world, demonstrate Earth stewardship, and ultimately allow additional resources for our **mission**.

Will it feel Jewish? Yes! This is an absolute must. We sing our song of hope wherever we are but we are also committed to a **Jewish *ruach*** (spirit) in our space. 3400 Dupont was a synagogue before it was a church and still has engraved Hebrew and stars of David on the facade. In a new worship space and shared building, we hope to create a place that welcomes our whole selves. You can find the report from our Jewish Identity and Spirituality work group on our website and it will guide us in this part of our exploration.

Will religious school still be on Sunday? The answer is unknown, but Sunday morning religious school for Shir Tikvah would not be an option at 3400 Dupont Ave S. Regardless of the decision to co-locate or not, we have, since 2012, been exploring many ways to reinvigorate our education program to be values-driven and engaging for families, including the question of when and how we deliver youth education. Our leadership team is at work on this challenge and continues to seek congregant input.

Is co-location a done deal? No! We don't yet know if this can or will work out. Dozens of people are working on this sacred project, exploring challenges and opportunities, and listening deeply. The voices of the congregation are at the very heart of this process. Hundreds of members have shared their thoughts through sthopesanddreams@gmail.com, at ten congregational forums, and in one-on-one meetings. We regularly update the website and your inboxes with documents and information and continually seek input. There will be meetings this fall where, consistent with our values, we will share what we have learned and developed while asking for thoughtful congregational guidance. We currently believe that the final decision is at least a year away.