
TEMPLE SINAI
ANNUAL MEETING
Board Reports

2025

Professional Relations Committee {PRC}

- Chair of 8-member PRC including Past Presidents overseeing clergy and senior staff.
- Completed 3 contract renewals in past 2 years.
- Led structured performance reviews and annual goal-setting meetings.
- Modernized evaluation/documentation process (digital transition).

Executive Leadership Integration

- Partnered closely with President Robert Sinsheimer for leadership continuity.
- Participated regularly in Executive Committee, Board of Trustees, and biweekly senior leadership meetings.

On-boarding & Succession Planning

- Oriented and supported incoming President-Elect and VP of Governance.
- Coordinated new board member on-boarding and engagement strategy.
- Helped organize and schedule key leadership events:
 - o June 1: Annual Meeting & Installation.
 - o June 24: Executive Committee Retreat.
 - o August 17: Board Retreat & VP on-boarding.

Committee & Task Force Involvement

- **Development Committee:** Legacy Society outreach, long-term development strategy, helped retain board development consultant.
- **Strategic Task Forces:** Bylaws, Congregational Covenant, Membership Sustaining Commitment.
- **Standing Committees:** Tzedek/Social Justice, Security, Endowment, House, Fine Arts.
- **Institutional Projects:** Temple Sinai Preschool, etc.

Community Engagement: Attendance and Involvement

- Fundraisers, Shabbat services, Brotherhood and Moshav events.
- Scholar-/Artist-in-Residence weekends, Adult Ed, Coffee House.
- Lifecycle events, meals, informal congregant gatherings.

Learning & External Engagement

- Member of URJ President's Cohort (monthly meetings).
- Receiving executive coaching focused on Jewish nonprofit board leadership.
- Active monitoring of local, national, and Israeli Jewish community trends.

Strategic Vision & Planning

- Collaborating with leadership on a long-term vision:
 - o Foster philanthropy via storytelling, gratitude, planning.
 - o Deepen member engagement through relationships and digital tools.
 - o Expand leadership pathways and lifelong Jewish education.
 - o Reinforce commitment to social action and inclusivity.

Addressing Antisemitism

Chaired by: LaWana Streger

Mission: Serves to educate about, advocate against and recognize antisemitism throughout our community.

- Hosted “Leading the Fight Against Antisemitism: Noa Fay in Conversation” and published recording as an episode of Seeking Sinai podcast.
- In memory of Kristallnacht, created and distributed bags to Noar families containing a yahrzeit candle, matches and age-appropriate prayers and planted daffodils with HUB teens as a part of The Daffodil Project.
- For a second year, continued work with Kulanu, ADL’s 8-month program dedicated to empowering congregations to address antisemitism and hate through education, community engagement and advocacy.
- Supported Education team in integrating congregation-wide educational opportunities at every age level, including the Teen Summit on Antisemitism; supported the Navon workshop for parents, “Antisemitism and Youth/Teen Wellbeing: Sharing and Caring for Our Kids”.

Backpack Buddies

Chaired by: Nikki Goldstein and Pam Miller

Mission: Provides well-balanced weekend meals to food-insecure children in metro Atlanta to enhance their mental and physical health as well as their ability to learn.

- Gathered semi-monthly to pack backpacks with food for children at Powers Ferry Elementary and the large food insecure population in the metropolitan Atlanta area.
- Celebrated the fourth night of Chanukah with a donation drive in support of Backpack Buddies.

Civic Engagement

Chaired by: Beth Lasher

Mission: Aim to achieve 100% voting congregation in November 2024 elections.

- Facilitated training and certification of congregant volunteers by the Fulton County Department of Registrations and Elections; the group then hosted at least four voter registration events in Fulton County.
- Efforts included holding a voter registration drive at Noar Opening Day; postcard writing parties in partnership with Common Cause and Georgia Votes; encouraging a voting plan and voter pledge through announcements and materials displayed in the Sinai lobby.

Community Assistance Center (CAC)

Chaired by: Andi Kaufman and Sheri Weiner

Mission: The CAC plays a vital role in the cities of Sandy Springs and Dunwoody by preventing hunger and homelessness, providing assistance for basic needs such as utilities, food and clothing, and actively engaging clients to work towards greater self-sufficiency through adult education and career counseling. Temple Sinai is proud to be a faith partner to support this ongoing need.

- Staffed the CAC South Food Pantry the 1st Monday and 2nd Wednesday of each month.
- Staffed the CAC Mini-Market Food Pantry & Upscale Thrift Store the 3rd Saturday of each month.
- Participated in Conflict De-escalation Training led by the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Georgia (NAMI Georgia), learning practical strategies for managing conflicts and fostering a supportive environment.
- Oversaw Temple Sinai's participation in the Hope for the Holidays program, sponsoring families in need during the holiday season and ensuring gifts for over 87 children.
- Attended Night of Hope, a fundraising event for CAC, featuring a performance of Beautiful: The Carole King Musical at City Springs Theatre Company.
- With the help of the Board of Trustees, donated fifty backpacks filled with school supplies for the Tools for School Program, which supports low-income families in Sandy Springs, Dunwoody, and the portion of Doraville served by the Dunwoody school cluster.
- Collected feedback from committee members to help identify areas for improvement moving forward. They will host a meeting at the end of the summer where they look forward to welcoming new members!

Georgia Kids Belong

Chaired by: Alexandra Mangel

Mission: Equipping communities to improve the experiences and outcomes of kids in Georgia foster care.

- With the efforts of this new initiative, Sinai will become the first synagogue member of Georgia Kids Belong's Foster Friendly Faith Community. Our participation involves being "trauma aware," teaching about fostering, and serving as a touchpoint for families. A training session scheduled for June 25.

Shomrei Adamah

Chaired by: Josh Marks

Mission: Raises awareness of, advocates for and educates on local and national environmental initiatives.

- Advocacy – efforts to preserve the Okefenokee Swamp and safeguard it from mining and to expand access to renewable energy in Georgia, both aims in partnership with Georgia Interfaith Power and Light (GIPL); at Sinai, advocacy for more environmentally friendly investing by the Endowment Committee.
- Education – working with the Education team to infuse environmental values and activities into the curriculum for all congregational learners, from preschoolers to adults, in partnership with Adamah ATL.
- Activities – Reverse Tashlich, Electronics Recycling, Tu B'shvat and Earth Day events (including Teva Trail spiritual quotes will be updated with messages from our preschoolers about the importance of the earth), Greening Your Mitzvah guide to help provide ideas for making environmentally-friendly decisions when planning events, monthly Eco-Challenges.
- Campus Enhancements – Owl Box installed on the Teva Trail; explored improvements to internal infrastructure and sustainable landscaping with solar powered lawn equipment.

Sinai Family Shelter

Chaired by: Mary Baron, Lisa Herman, Olen Earle, and Lori Spett

Mission: Supports families experiencing homelessness by providing a safe place to sleep, meals and community one week at a time.

- Hosted residents at Temple Sinai for 4 weeks throughout the year (August, October, December, and February).
- Congregational volunteers moved residents in and out of the facility, laundered linens and shopped for groceries, provided dry goods, gift cards, and kitchen essentials, brought nightly dinners, served as overnight hosts, Saturday day hosts and teen hosts.

Immigration and Refugee Justice

Chaired by: Janie Fishman and Diane Heller

Mission: Support the immigrant and refugee community in the metropolitan Atlanta area through advocacy, education, programming, and volunteer work.

- Continued collaborating with Friends of Refugees in Clarkston: Congregant volunteers participated in the weekly Parwana program for illiterate Afghan women by acting as aides in the ESL classes; organized a baby shower for 12 expectant refugee moms, providing food, playing ice-breaker games and ensuring each received a gift bag of necessities; assisted at the Clarkston Fall Festival, supplying a bouncy house for the children and helping out.
- Partnered with the Education Committee to screen REFUGE, a film that takes place in Clarkston and addresses overcoming prejudice and hate, and a virtual Q&A session with the director.
- Sponsored a Refugee Shabbat with HIAS, a Jewish refugee agency that provides services to support refugees around the world.
- Participated in the New Americans Celebration, a day of advocacy and education bringing together refugees, immigrants, and allies to highlight the contributions of New Americans in our state.
- During the holidays, adopted a family from Ser Familia – a social service agency that provides services to hundreds of Latino families in the Atlanta area – to ensure the children had gifts from their wish lists.
- Due to limited federal funding for refugee agencies, the committee donated \$1,000 from the Refugee Fund to several organizations they support: Friends of Refugees, Ser Familia, the Afghan American Alliance of Georgia.

Tzedek Committee

Chaired by: Emily Webb, Vice President of Community

Mission: Presidentially appointed group of diverse congregants established to develop a process for and subsequent implementation of congregational-led Tzedek justice initiatives.

- Development of timeline, application, and mentorship process for Tzedek Initiatives.
- Communication of Tzedek Initiatives Guiding Principles and Selection and Approval Process to our Sinai congregation.
- Call for applications; receipt and vetting of proposals.
- Mentorship of two finalists – Supporting Honest Instruction & Equitable Learning for Our Diaspora and Building Connections Thru Conversation – and oversee education session “Tzedek in Action: A Community Conversation”.
- Advanced Committee recommendation to the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees for vote.

VP of Community (Con't) | Emily Webb

Tzedek Committee (Con't)

I am excited to report that during the May Board meeting, the Board unanimously voted to approve the support of both initiatives.

It has been a true honor to have served in the role of Vice President of Community over the past year and to have witnessed firsthand the incredibly meaningful work of these tireless committees. As a result of their efforts, Temple Sinai, the greater Atlanta community, and our society have prospered. I look forward to all that lies ahead!

VP of Development | Kevin Levingston

The 2024-2025 fiscal year was another step forward for Temple Sinai's development efforts. Highlights included the following:

- Our annual gala was a success from both community participation and finances. This year's gala on March 1st, "A Night in the Big Easy" attracted nearly 300 participants and netted \$190K exceeding our fundraising goal by nearly 30%.
- We are proceeding with a mid-summer installation of a donor wall in the Lehrman Rabbinic Garden. Funds from plaques purchased by Sinai members will support the Rabbinic Endowment Fund to ensure future rabbinic leadership by providing Rabbinic salaries in perpetuity. We have already raised \$240K from plaque purchases. The wall and inaugural plaques will be installed this summer, with several plaques still available for purchase.
- Progress was made in expanding participation in Legacy Sinai. This included several members formalizing their legacy giving and an overall increase in participation. A kabbalat panim was held in late January to recognize both Legacy Sinai participants as well as members who have previously established endowment funds.
- The Sinai Executive Committee and Board have held a series of meetings with a philanthropic consultant, to continue fostering a "culture of philanthropy" at Temple Sinai and we look forward to continuing this work in the coming year.

Chair of Endowment Fund Committee | Cindy Gibbs

The total Temple Sinai Endowment has supported spiritual life, communal life and education. This year the funds have contributed to:

- Supporting our clergy and education efforts.
- Offering a robust roster of speakers and guest musicians for all community demographics.
- Enriching and expanding preschool programming.
- Enhancing security.
- Enhancing our campus.
- Maintaining and enhancing our exceptional library.
- Providing transportation to seniors.
- Providing scholarships to students for NOAR, our preschool, Jewish camps and peer travel opportunities.

We continue to partner with Fifth Third Bank to manage our investments. Through a conservative investment and spending strategy, we have prioritized securing the principal of the endowment fund and preserving its long-term stability. This strategy enables consistent, sustainable funding for projects and initiatives aligned with each named fund's purpose. The fund balance is currently around \$15 million with investment returns meeting the benchmarks set by our investment strategy and closely monitored by our Investment Committee.

In the last twelve months, Temple Sinai's education programs have thrived and expanded. Temple Sinai offers a diverse range of engaging opportunities that foster learning, community-building, and support for all members.

Temple Sinai Preschool (TSPS)

- Remains a leader in Jewish early childhood education in Atlanta, with full enrollment at 162 students and waiting lists for most age groups.
- We are updating four rooms in the upstairs education wing to accommodate expanding preschool needs for the fall.
- Became a participating school in ElevatEd, a national initiative aimed at recruiting, training and retaining Early Childhood Educators.

We extend our deepest gratitude to Jamah Maman, Director of Early Childhood Learning & Engagement, and the dedicated teachers and staff who consistently provide exceptional education for our youngest learners.

K-12 Education- NOAR (K to 6th and Family) & HUB for Teen Learning and Engagement (7th to 12th- Hadracha U'kehillah v'Bina (Leadership-Community-Wisdom))

- K-12 Education Programming continues to flourish, offering a variety of exciting, enriching, and fun learning experiences.
- Under the leadership of Shana Wilons, Director of Youth and Teen Learning & Engagement, a new curriculum has been introduced focusing on values derived from Torah stories.
- **NOAR (K to 6th and Family)**
 - o Sinai launched Sunday Family Education opportunities to deepen family involvement.
 - o Marisa Kaiser, Shana Wilons, Natan Trief, and Jamah Maman participated in the "Shifting the Paradigm" trip to Israel. This experience will inform the second year of our Israel curriculum, aligning with Sinai's vision for Israel education.
 - o To further support our students, we have added a Student Care Coordinator position, aimed at expanding accessibility and success for all members of NOAR.
- **HUB**
 - o Our Madrachim program grew significantly this year, reaching a total of 76 teens, and HUB programming has flourished under the leadership of Brandon Gabay, Youth and Teen Engagement Manager.
 - o Attendance across all youth programs has increased, and we are excited about the creation of a Teen Board this year.

A heartfelt thank you to Shana Wilons, Kate Hennessey, Brandon Gabay, and Sigal Kahn for their continued dedication to our youth programs' success.

Adult Education

- Continues to offer meaningful learning opportunities for our members.
- Over 100 adults participated in our Introduction to Judaism and Melton classes.
- Seeking Sinai podcast engaged listeners across various topics and introduced new branding and music.
- The Amiyut (Israel & Peoplehood) program had great success in its first year, hosting many successful events and future plans for a trip to Kibbutz Be'eri, which suffered the biggest loss of any village from the October 7th attacks.

We are deeply grateful to Rabbi Natan Trief, Director of Adult Learning & PNK Learning Center Librarian and his team of volunteers for creating and sustaining such impactful adult programming throughout the year.

Lastly, a special thank you to Marisa Kaiser, Charles S. Ackerman Senior Director of Learning & Engagement, whose leadership and vision drive the success of all educational initiatives at Temple Sinai. Her unwavering commitment ensures that every member has access to enriching learning experiences, and we are fortunate to have her guiding our educational efforts.

Temple Sinai remains a warm, innovative Reform Jewish community, growing from strength to strength, including by number of member families, number of membership engagement activities, and member engagement. Our experiences together are guided by our mission “your home for fostering spiritual growth, nurturing genuine connections, and strengthening Jewish life,” values, and pillars gleaned from our Culture of Belonging initiative of a few years ago:

- living Jewishly,
- inclusivity – bringing our whole selves to Sinai,
- ensuring everyone is noticed, named, and known,
- partnering with each other and our outstanding clergy and staff because each of us has our part in our community.

This report focuses on the work of lay leaders, community members, and staff responsible for Membership Engagement activities. Thanks to community members too many to name and staff members Avery Friedman, Brittany Schear, Carrie Bohn, Shelly Dresdner, and many, many others for the time, love, and skill each puts to expanding the number of ways Sinai members can meet, get to know each other, and become a community. Your efforts are central to a deeper feeling of belonging at Sinai.

Affinity Groups

- Consistent, successful programming by Navon for older members, Moshav for empty nesters; Women of Sinai; Brotherhood; Sinai 20's and 30's; College Outreach; and, an emerging group, people completing the Intro to Judaism/Conversion Class are on-ramps to fun and friendships at Sinai.
- An opportunity for the future is to regularly connect leaders of the affinity groups to learn from each other and find ways to collaborate.

Smaller Groups

The Atidaynu class for leadership development; Hineini Accessibility Committee for ensuring our facilities and programs are inclusive for people with differing abilities; Nefesh whose aim is to reduce stigma around severe, chronic mental illness and provide mutual support; and Sinai Circles, now including 240 people in 18 circles with shared interests, geography, or life experience. Each of these offers an opportunity to get to know and be known in a small group of people from Sinai.

- Many Special Shabbats were held during the year as a way to gather informal groups of Sinai members.
- At the same time, informal groups are gathering for worship, education, social, and social action/social justice activities all the time.
- An opportunity for the future is identifying roles lay leaders can play alongside staff to support and grow these formal and informal small groups.

Supporting Individual Sinai Members Seeking Seeper Engagement

- Thanks to Bill Apple, Linda Citron, Linda Bachmann, the New Member Committee, and staff for welcoming new members personally.
- Program planners use calls and texts for personal invitations to activities at Sinai.
- This spring, Women of Sinai is organizing a paired activity.
- Atidaynu has developed a survey and staff support to help members decide on their engagement after the program ends.
- Atidaynu members acting as Shamashim/welcomer at Shabbat Services are seeking tools to guide newcomers effectively.
- The new website and CRM software launching this summer will aid these efforts.
- An opportunity for the future is to develop an Ambassador program to support members seeking community at Sinai.

On a personal note

- After being invited to join Sinai's Board of Trustees, I was reminded of a childhood lesson: "the more you put in, the more you get out." Like Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz, I realized I "had the power all along" to shape my experience at Temple Sinai.
- I am not suggesting that every member of our wonderful community should seek the same experience or be more involved than you want to be.
- I am saying that Temple Sinai is a place where, every time I make a call, join a Zoom, or make the trip to Sandy Springs, I find people I enjoy; I grow personally and Jewishly from being with you; and I am glad I came.

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- I am grateful to be part of this special community and hope the approach to membership engagement described here makes that more possible for each of us.

Key Accomplishments in 2024–2025

• Salesforce CRM¹ Implementation

- o Partnered with Fionta (Third Party Software Implementation Service Partner) to design and build a new CRM system tailored to Temple Sinai's needs, many of which were identified in the *Culture of Belonging* initiative.
- o Completed initial data migrations, staff training, and user acceptance testing.
- o Developed communication strategy, training materials, and interim processes for staff and members.
- o Prepared for a phased roll-out to ensure a stable transition, with the CRM launching first, followed by the website and member portal.
- o Focused on managing community expectations and preparing members for changes.
- o Built infrastructure and processes to serve as a foundation for long-term engagement and connection.

• Website Redesign

- o Collaborated with Fionta to redesign Temple Sinai's website for improved usability and accessibility.
- o Staff trained on approved Fionta built design templates and wireframes for content management.
- o Communications team developed site content using new templates.
- o Customized member portal created to elevate the user experience.

• Inclusive and Strategic Communications

- o Continued integration of *Culture of Belonging* principles in all communications.
- o Strengthened alignment across departments to support cohesive messaging for events, holidays, and temple initiatives.
- o Increased use of data to segment audiences and personalize communications.

¹ CRM is Congregation Relationship Software. We are migrating from Shulware CRM to Salesforce CRM.

An underlying theme for Spiritual Life this year has been “Finding Our Sacred Moments” – whether by creating new experiences or by recognizing those spiritual moments that are already in our lives.

Activities have included:

- Showcasing congregants’ thoughts and voices in two Seeking Sinai episodes –
 - Elul Podcast – Before the High Holy Days, participants reflected on the meaning of forgiveness.
 - Pre-Passover Podcast – An opportunity for congregants to express their feelings about “Freedom.”
- Mikveh Field Trip – A tour of MACoM, Atlanta’s community’s mikveh, provided over twenty congregants with new insights into a modern interpretation of this ancient ritual.
- Tu B”Shevat Lunch ‘N’ Learn – Collaborated with Rabbi Segal to prepare a creative presentation of Biblical foods, highlighting their religious significance.
- Collaborated with staff to offer items of spiritual significance to new members and Jews by choice.
- Supported and provided input for a well-attended two-part program, “Navigating Death in Judaism.”
- Engaged Board members in a thoughtful look at “hope”, reflecting on the question: What is your relationship with hope?

Activities have included:

- **Kesher** – The “face” of our caring community, these incredible volunteers have reached approximately one hundred Sinai families by phone and have delivered meals to sixty grateful families—just since the beginning of 2025.
- **Chevra Kadisha** (men’s and women’s groups) – These dedicated congregants continue to perform the sacred ritual of tahara (preparing the deceased for burial) for Sinai members and their families.
- **Shir Sinai** – This talented committee has kept the spotlight on music, with outstanding guest artists, successful coffeehouses, and a variety of new music for Shabbat services.
- **Shammashim** – Under the creative guidance of Atidaynu class members, this group has found new ways to welcome congregants and visitors to Friday Shabbat services.