

Temple Emanu-El Religious Practices Committee
Annual Report
May 3, 2020

The Religious Practices Committee has undertaken a couple of projects and has advised on various questions of religious practice and policy at our Temple.

Our largest project was a congregational survey, in an effort to understand how members of the congregation view the religious services offered at Temple Emanu-El. Our purpose was to see where we are, what people would like to experience, and chart a course that builds our community within a deep understanding of Jewish religious service. In the coming weeks, the committee will review the survey results and comments so that we can recommend changes and/or improvements, as well as keep the practices that members enjoy and find fulfilling. Many thanks to the 52 members who completed the survey. A special thank you to Paula Breger who put the survey online and generated the report.

The committee also formulated a Kashrut policy for the Temple. This has not yet been formalized because it requires another iteration after presentation to the board. Although we attempted to incorporate considerations about allergens into a general food policy, the board decided that this is better covered under a safety policy. We also need to consider how strict we should be regarding hekshered meat in order to not preclude the participation of the many members without kosher kitchens. The Temple building closing has alleviated the immediate need for this policy, but the committee will revise it in the coming months and present it again to the board.

The committee also supported the purchase of Etz Chayim Chumashim from CBI with a generous donation from one of our members. This will allow everyone to follow along with the Torah reading from a common Chumash, although we will still retain the Hertz and Plaut for those who prefer them. We have been using the translation from Etz Chayim for many years.

Other questions discussed by the committee for which we provided guidance and recommendations include Christian songs in the sanctuary by non-Jewish visitors, honors for non-Jewish family members during Bnei Mitzvah Torah services, and other suggestions for Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, and Simchat Torah.

Many thanks to the members of the committee who care deeply about our Temple and congregation, and bring this care and love of Jewish tradition to our deliberations and recommendations: Jackie Berman, Bob Bender, Carole Taut, Morry Korinow, Jennifer Lampron, Kevin Miller, Susan Shwom, Sharyn Russell, Stuart Mandell, and Cantor Vera Broekhuysen.

Sandra Kassin Deardorff