



P.O. Box 3715, Missoula, MT 59806

## **Crossroads Report to Our Members and Supporters From the Har Shalom Board**

### **Background**

Many Har Shalom members recently participated in three “Crossroads” meetings. So how did we find ourselves at a crossroads? For the last seven and a half years, Laurie Franklin has served Har Shalom as rabbinic intern and spiritual leader. Laurie will be ordained in January 2019 and of course will no longer be serving as an intern. This major change in her status means a significant change in Har Shalom’s situation. We clearly need to make decisions about what the future holds for our congregation, and of course, Laurie needs to make decisions about what the future holds for her. However, it is important to note that the board emphasized the importance of considering possible alternatives (see below) based on current and projected financial obligations. What is our vision and what do various visions cost to implement?

Before proceeding to the results of these meetings, we are pleased to report that with the help of our members and supporters, we are moving forward to clarify our program priorities, and time and compensation decisions for our rabbi.

### **Three Crossroads Meetings**

During these meetings, board members provided attendees with information about our financial situation and solicited feedback about the role of Har Shalom in our lives, our vision of Har Shalom’s future, and the relative financial implications of the alternative visions that we identified.

### **What Were the Results of All This Inquiry?**

The overriding questions were whether Har Shalom could/should retain the building and not hire an ordained rabbi, should opt for hiring an ordained rabbi and sell the building, or opt for both a building and ordained rabbi.

Board members analyzed the input received at the first meeting, and here’s what turned up regarding those alternatives, including the overall budget impact.

1. Full-time rabbi and building (+ \$38k over current budget)
2. Three-quarter time rabbi and building (+ \$20k over current budget)
3. Half-time rabbi and building (Approximate current budget)
4. Other



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The results of this exercise were instructive. The final tally showed that approximately equal numbers favored a “half-time” or “three-quarter time rabbi” plus building. A handful of responders favored a “full-time rabbi and building,” and an equal number had “other” suggestions such as selling the building and not hiring an ordained rabbi.

### **What Is the Current Status of This Process?**

The May 6 meeting was an innovative, “open source” session led by facilitator Kris Bayer. It which was designed to help us develop focused new directions for the congregation. We believe the process succeeded in doing just that. Participants chose to meet in small groups that focused on projects those present had identified as ways of developing the congregation. The intent was to choose projects that inspired them to get involved. Three major directions emerged:

1. A Jewish cultural institute (as a subset of Har Shalom) that would offer an expanded program of offerings, including arts, music, dance, literature, history that would appeal to both secular and religious Jews
2. A fundraising effort, to include grant-writing, a major annual fundraiser, enhanced rental of our building, clear communication with our members and supporters about each year’s fundraising calendar, and the possible involvement of a professional fundraiser
3. Increased family engagement, with outreach and activities geared towards the needs of young families

### **What’s Next?**

These meetings were intended to take steps now to determine our future path and to provide direction for Har Shalom’s annual meeting this fall. Project groups are forming; if you have an interest in any of the projects described above, please contact President David Cox. We are encouraged by the energy generated by these meetings and hope you will, in turn, be encouraged to join us.

#### **Har Shalom Board:**

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Vice President Sherry Kolenda

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