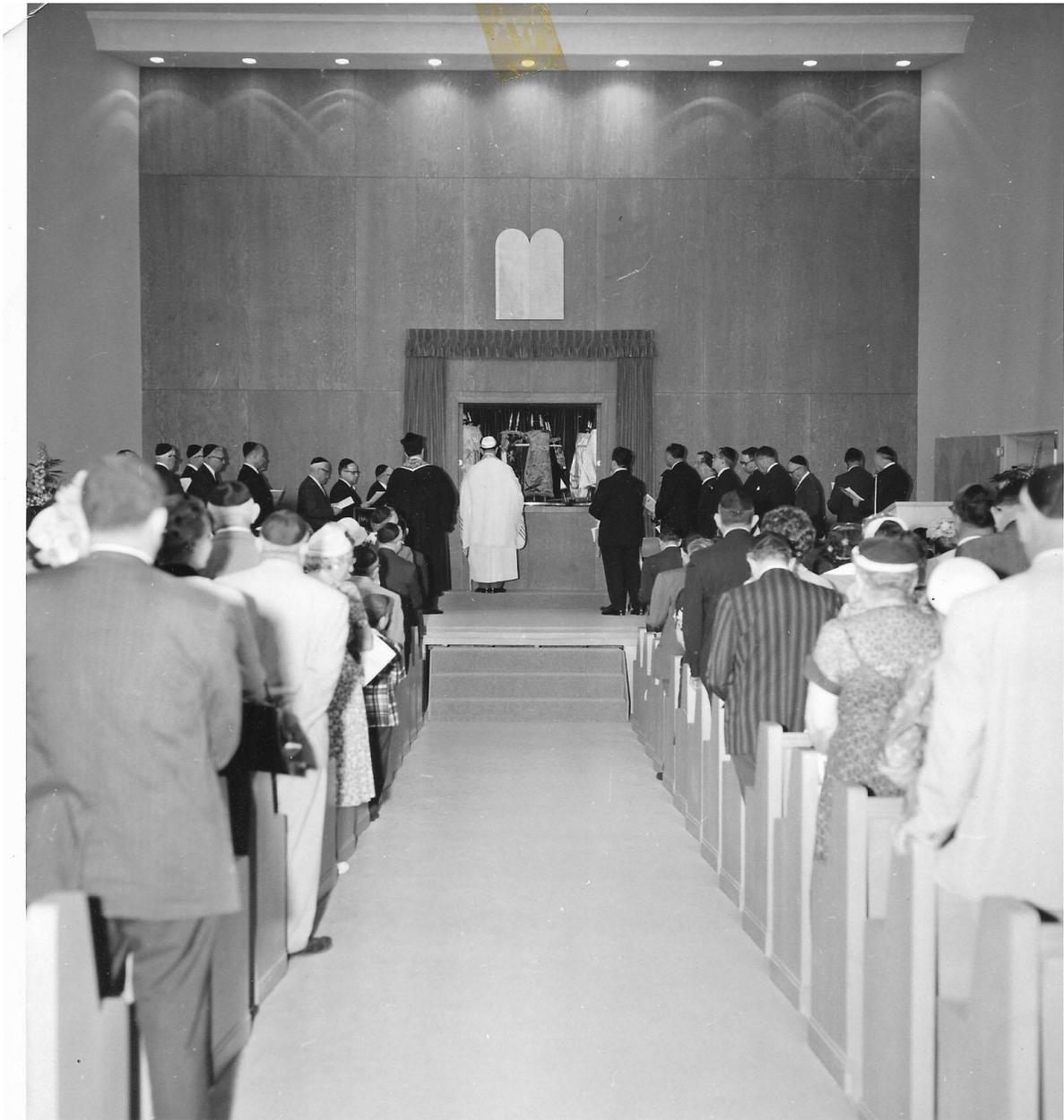


## BEKI Sanctuary Redesign: Update and Upcoming Survey



**DAYS OF OLD:** This photo from the dedication of the BEKI sanctuary in 1960 surprised us, because the bimah and the ark then looked much different from what we are used to. So the redesign we're now embarking on will be one more stage in the evolution of our worship space. Many thanks to Rachel Bashevkin, Howard Gralla, and Peggy Hackett for unearthing the photo.

Dear BEKI friends,

Although the month of Heshvan contains no Jewish holidays, it has been a busy time for the sanctuary redesign committee. We are excited about helping to create a worship space that is rooted in BEKI tradition, embodies our present community, and speaks to our future.

This message provides an update and advance notice of some upcoming events.

### First, the upcoming events:

- In November, we will conduct an **online congregational survey** to get your ideas about redesigning our sanctuary to reflect our 21st-century values of warmth, inclusiveness, and spiritual intimacy. Please keep an eye out for details and a link to the survey.
- We will present survey results and seek additional feedback at a **congregational meeting on December 16 at 7:30pm**. Again, details will follow. In the meantime, please save the date; we want to hear from you! We might schedule additional meetings, if necessary, to make sure that we hear from everyone who has ideas to share.

### Next, an update on our activities:

- The committee has met three times to organize our work, define our goals, and set priorities.
- We gathered and **reviewed background material**, including BEKI's original 1959 building plans; documents from the BEKI 2000 planning and renovations; and work by a more recent committee examining possible changes for the sanctuary.
- We developed the following **mission statement**: *To design an inspirational sanctuary at BEKI that is warm, inclusive, accessible, and feasible.*
- We are **talking with other congregations** that have redesigned their sanctuaries, learning from their experience.
- We have **met with four architecture firms**, obtaining proposals from each. All are qualified for this project; all have pros and cons.
- BEKI's executive committee has **authorized us to select an architect** and negotiate a proposed agreement for the initial phase of the project, known as conceptual design.

### What's next?

We expect to **recommend an architect** to the executive board in the next couple of weeks and have the firm on board in time for them to attend our December 16 congregational meeting.

After the congregational meeting, we will **synthesize your feedback** and produce **several possible designs**. We will then bring those designs to the congregation and incorporate additional feedback.

Along the way, we will provide regular updates.

The **goal is to produce a design by next spring** that has the support of the congregation and Board of Directors and is ready to implement.

### **The background, in case you missed it:**

Over the summer, the Board of Directors agreed to embark on this process at the initiation of our president, Yaron Lew. This sanctuary redesign committee formed in August. An introductory email to the congregation, during Sukkot, covered some basic information, which we also repeat below.

#### **Why change our sanctuary?**

Our synagogue was designed in 1959 for a congregation with a rabbi and cantor, a choir, and a formal, hierarchical style of worship.

We want to create a sanctuary that reflects our 21st-century values of warmth, inclusiveness, and spiritual intimacy, and that enhances our volunteer-led services in which we are all participants, not audience members.

The overarching goals involve making our sanctuary:

- more comfortable physically (which includes heating, cooling, ventilation, acoustics, and seating)
- accessible for all people
- more intimate in scale and layout
- warmer and more inviting to everyone

#### **What will the project cover? What will change and what will stay the same?**

In a message to the congregation in July, Yaron outlined several components:

- covering the sanctuary's cinder block columns with a more appealing finish
- rearranging the seats into a horseshoe shape, facing the reader's table
- making the bimah (stage) accessible for people with mobility challenges
- replacing, in some fashion, the folding divider between the main sanctuary and the social hall
- addressing, in some fashion, the sanctuary ceiling

There are many other possible elements of a redesign: windows, floor covering, lighting, the ark (or its doors), the wood panels flanking the ark. We will give consideration to all these possibilities. Some may change and some may stay the same.

### **Who is on the committee?**

Our team is:

Carole Bass, co-chair

Rick Saltz, co-chair

Lynn Brotman

Eric Dunsker, Board liaison and House Committee chair

Jonathan Gordon

Howard Gralla

Marga Hirsch

Lynn and Jonathan are interior designers. Eric has deep knowledge of BEKI's facilities. Rick supervised many design and construction projects in his professional life. Others of us bring expertise in how synagogue services work, in general and at BEKI; organizational skills; and long-time relationships with many BEKI members.

The committee is working with the guidance of Rabbi Woodward, Yaron, and the BEKI board. Construction will be a separate phase of the project. Some members of this committee will work on that phase; some may not.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts—via our survey, at the congregational meeting, and informally by email or at Shabbat kiddush.

B'shalom,

The BEKI Sanctuary Redesign Committee