

## A Message from BEKI's Sanctuary Redesign Committee

Dear BEKI friends,

*Moadim l'simchah!* We hope you have had a joyous Sukkot.

As our month of holidays nears its end on Shemini Atzeret (September 28), we will read about King Solomon's dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem. This year his prayer has special meaning as we embark on the process of redesigning our own worship space, BEKI's main sanctuary.

Our synagogue president, Yaron Lew, mentioned over the summer that the Executive Board agreed to begin this process. We, the newly constituted Sanctuary Redesign Committee, are writing now to introduce ourselves and say a little bit about what you can expect from us and the project.

We are in the earliest stages of our work, with many more questions than answers. Still, we'll try to address some of the main questions here:

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

Our synagogue was built 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 physically comfortable (which includes heating, cooling, ventilation, and seating);
- more accessible for people with disabilities;
- more intimate in scale and layout;
- a warmer environment, more inviting to everyone.

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

Yaron's message in July outlined several components:

- covering the sanctuary's cinder block columns with a more appealing finish;
- rearranging the seats from front-facing rows to a more center-facing layout;
- 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;
- and 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

Lynn Brotman

Eric Dunsker, board liaison and House Committee chair

Jonathan Gordon

Howard Gralla

Marga Hirsch

Rick Saltz, co-chair

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. All of us are excited about helping to create a worship space that reflects and enhances our community.

### **What will the redesign committee do?**

We will:

- Review previous plans and ideas for redesigning the BEKI sanctuary.
- Research other congregations that have undertaken similar projects.
- Present information and ideas to the BEKI community, and gather feedback.
- Synthesize that feedback and produce several possible designs.
- Bring those designs to the congregation and incorporate additional feedback.
- Provide consistent updates.
- Produce a design that has the support of the congregation and Board of Directors and is ready to implement.

We will work 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. Other BEKI volunteers will be responsible for fundraising.

### **Do BEKI members get a say in the redesign?**

Of course! We'll hold congregation-wide meetings, on Zoom and in person, to present some initial ideas. As mentioned above, we'll incorporate that feedback into one or more proposed designs, then get more feedback from BEKI members.

### **When will we have a design that's ready to go?**

We're developing a timeline now and expect to have a design in 2022. You'll be hearing from us all along the way!

**What will it cost, and how will BEKI pay for it?**

It's too soon to project the cost. The BEKI board will make the ultimate decisions on design, budget, and financing.

As Sukkot concludes, we prepare to leave our temporary dwellings of the past week and move back into our permanent homes. There's no better time to begin thinking about the redesign of our community's permanent home, our BEKI sanctuary.

*Chag sameach!*

The Sanctuary Redesign Committee:

Carole Bass, co-chair  
Lynn Brotman  
Eric Dunsker, board liaison and House Committee chair  
Jonathan Gordon  
Howard Gralla  
Marga Hirsch  
Rick Saltz, co-chair