



Oak Park Temple B’Nai Abraham Zion **2017 Annual Report**

Rabbi Max Weiss
Cantor Julie Green
Rabbi Gary Gerson, Emeritus
President Shari Schindler

Oak Park Temple B'nai Abraham Zion is one of the oldest Reform congregations in the Chicago area, dating back to the 1919 merger of the Zion Congregation (founded in 1864) and the B'nai Abraham Congregation (founded 1871). Originally known as Washington Boulevard Temple and located on Chicago's West Side, the congregation dedicated its current home at 1235 North Harlem Avenue in 1957 and has since been known as Oak Park Temple B'nai Abraham Zion.

Annual Meeting Program

January 21, 2018

Motzi	Cantor Julie Yugend-Green
Rabbi's Greeting	Rabbi Max Weiss
President's Welcome & Report	Shari Schindler
Congregational Awards	<i>Rabbi Samuel Schwartz Keter Shem Tov Award</i> Karen & Randy Gillett
	<i>Rabbi Leonard Mervis Award for Social justice</i> Margaret Rohter
	<i>Emerging Leader Award</i> Jenn George
	<i>Oak Park Temple Lifetime Achievement Award</i> Lauren & Seth Levrant
	50 Years Membership
	25 Years Membership
Endowment Fund Report	Ron Broida
Nominating Committee Report & Election of Board of Directors	Dr. Deborah Holdstein
Installation of New Members of the Board of Directors	Rabbi Max Weiss & Cantor Julie Yugend-Green
Old Business	
New Business	Constitutional Amendment re: Additional Clergy
Adjourn	

Report of the Nominating Committee

The nominating committee, the members of which will also join me for next year's deliberations: Sue Blaine, Amy Drescher-Crumpley, Marc Imowitz, Brad Wainer, Scott Zimmerman, and Dan Zoloto, has completed its task, and we are pleased to announce the following nominees for Temple Officers, At-Large Board Members, and Committee/Affiliate Board Representatives. Subject to approval at the Annual Congregational meeting, their term begins on Sunday, January 21, 2018.

Temple Officers (Term Ends January 2019)

President: Shari Schindler
Executive Vice President: Liz Simon
Finance Vice President: Aaron Lebovitz
Vice President Without Portfolio: Jenn George
Building Vice President: David Katz
Treasurer: Dan Zoloto
Secretary: Alan Fox
Immediate Past President: Deborah H. Holdstein

Continuing At-Large Board Members (Term Ends January 2019)

Doris Angell
Amy Drescher-Crumpley
Janice Moskoff
Elliot Regenstein

At-Large Board Members (Term Ends January 2020)

Jeffrey Bergman
Ali Mandell
Maurie Stern

Continuing representatives of Temple committees are as follows:

Randy Gillett (Religious School)
Carolyn Sherman (Glasser Preschool)
Amelia Hardy (Women of Oak Park Temple)
Susan Cicelsky (Adult Education)
Allison Cowett (Social Action)
Sarah Lewensohn (Development and Annual Giving)
Jimmy Korshak (Worship)
Marc Imowitz (Membership)
Karen Muriello (Communications)

We thank all who have agreed to serve our Oak Park Temple community in these capacities, and I'm sure you will join me in thanking our departing members (Olga Vydra and Brian Hammersley). Again, thank you to all who now serve and who will serve on our Board and to the many more of you who serve Oak Park Temple in so many important ways.

L'shalom, Deborah H. Holdstein, Immediate Past President

Proposed Constitutional Amendment

C. Additional Members of the Clergy

Section 1 - Selection of Additional Members of the Clergy

- a. An additional member of the clergy (for instance, an assistant or associate Rabbi or an assistant or associate Cantor) shall be selected by a special selection committee appointed by the President of the Congregation with the approval of the Board of Directors. This committee, in consultation with the Rabbi and Cantor, shall recommend to the Board of Directors an additional member of the clergy to be elected.
- b. Upon approval of the Board of Directors, this recommendation shall be presented to the Congregation at a regular or special meeting.

Section 2 - Employment Conditions

- a. Following the election of an additional member of the clergy by the membership of the Congregation, the Board of Directors shall be guided with respect to term of service, tenure, life tenure, retirement, or termination of services by the procedures recommended by the Union for Reform Judaism (and, as relevant, the Central Conference of American Rabbis or the American Conference of Cantors). The recommendations of these bodies also shall be used to guide the relationships and contractual matters between the clergy member and the Congregation.
- b. An additional member of the clergy as defined in Section 1a may be dismissed by a two-thirds majority of the Board of Directors.

Section 3 - Duties of the Clergy Member (Assistant or Associate Rabbi, Assistant or Associate Cantor, or the like)

The member of the clergy shall perform duties as determined by the Board of Directors, in consultation with the Rabbi and Cantor. In establishing these duties, the Board shall refer to the guidelines issued by the relevant professional organization (specified above) and the Union for Reform Judaism.

Section 4 – Committees

The clergy member shall be an ex-officio member without vote of the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee, and all standing committees.

Report of the Temple President

This year, Oak Park Temple celebrated 154 years as a Congregation. Whether sought out as a sanctuary of comfort, a hub of activism, a way to engage with like-minded people to promote justice and compassion in the world, a place for teens to find their own voices, or a place to kindle and value friendship, our community offers a home for all. As you read the committee reports, you will get a sense of our vibrant community through all of the actions of the last year.

The Board was busy as well. During this year we:

- Revised our mission statement to reflect our core values.
- Participated in a sold out member retreat.
- Applied for and won a security grant from the Jewish United Fund, which we used to update our telephone and intercom system, the security cameras and boosted the WiFi.
- Empowered the development committee to re-think our dues structure. They recommended hiring a consultant to help shape the future of giving at OPT. Partners in Effective Philanthropy's assessment was recently completed and a working group will begin to design and implement strategies in the near future.
- Held a board training & retreat facilitated by the Union for Reform Judaism. Five goals were established in our action plan – Redefining Membership Intake, Refining Board Roles & Responsibilities, Reviewing Board Size and Structure, Improved communications and a Board Orientation. We are well on our way to completing this plan, with working groups in place for each action item.
- OPT will be participating in a Benchmarking study sponsored by the URJ to help strengthen our congregation. Look for an email soon.
- Reviewed professional staffing and determined that an Assistant Rabbi position was needed to increase the personal connection between clergy and community. A committee was created, headed by Jenn George, which formulated and posted a job announcement, reviewed resumes, interviewed candidates, coordinated onsite visits for two candidates and will continue to work together on selection and onboarding for the position. This position is almost funded – and if you haven't yet – please make your contribution to this important campaign.
- Called all members to wish them a Happy New Year as part of our welcoming strategy.
- Posted members of the board as greeters at every Friday night service.
- Approved a new communications plan to shift the focus of our communications to the website and reduce the number of emails, while increasing the timeliness and transparency of news.

I look forward to another exciting and productive year. As always please feel free to reach out.

Respectfully submitted, Shari Schindler, President

Adult Education Committee

Oak Park Temple is fortunate to have had a full and diverse calendar of speakers and events. The Adult Education Committee continues to bring interesting speakers and topics to the congregation and community. In conjunction with committees such as ARZA/ISRAEL, Women of Reform Judaism, the Green Chaverim, Melton, Rabbis Weiss and Gerson (all of who have submitted their reports), we strive to keep the level of enrichment enticing. The following are some of the programs from this past year.

Yearlong Programs:

- Torah Study I
- Torah Study II
- Biblical Hebrew
- Adult Hebrew
- S.T.A.R.
- Rabbi Weiss - Melton programs
- Rabbi Gerson - Introduction to Judaism

Special Programs Included:

- April 30, 2017 - Peter Hayes – Author – Nazi Germany
- October 19, 2017 - Bassem Eid, Lecturer/Activist– Israel/Palestinian Concerns
- November 12, 2017 - Interfaith at Grace Lutheran with Rabbi Weiss and Lutheran Clergy
- November 27, 2017 - Robert Munman – Art Historian

Susan Cicelsky, Chairperson

Rabbi Max Weiss

Mel Loeb

Doris Angel

Barbara Mirel

Susan Schiff

Lauren Levrant

Alan Fox

ArtsUp!

January 2017

- Held winter salon in Jonathan Franklin's home. Shared ongoing creative endeavors and then had a tour of Jonathan's studio and work.

April

- Held spring salon in Judith Litt's home. Shared current artwork with each other and socialized.

August

- Held summer salon at Karen Muriello's home. Had a mini show and tell of each person's current artwork and began planning lobby binder project. The binder will display pages created by Oak Park Temple artists showing their art and information. Binder will be kept in OPT rotunda for anyone who is interested.

October

- Held our fall salon at Karen Muriello's home. Met and shared our completed binder pages, got feedback, and socialized. Elected Joyce Porter as our next chairperson.

Throughout the year

- Shared members' news and accomplishments via email with membership.

Respectfully submitted by Alix Mikesell, Chair of OPT ArtsUp!

Report of the Vice-President - Building

This year we have been focused on general building maintenance. Due to flooding, the sump pumps have all been upgraded. Repairs to the elevator have been completed this year and it is fully functional. The team researched the ever present hot and cold issues in the chapel, and tweaked it a bit to provide for a more consistent temperature. The fence in the back of the property was falling down, thus it was fixed. A new plaque for the past presidents was installed in the sanctuary – check it out. The carpeting in the sanctuary, chapel and community hall is wearing out. We have researched and costed out the carpeting and recommended to the board that it all be replaced. We are looking forward to some kind of capital budget next fiscal year to begin that process, as well as additional upgrades to our aging facility.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Brian Hammersley, Building Vice-President*

Caring Community

This is the first full year for the Caring Community committee. The chairpersons, Karen Gillett, Ali Mandell and Maurie Stern have worked with the subcommittee co-chairs Stewart Goldman, Bobbi Montejo, Meg Ross, Amy Pokras, Vanessa Klugman, and Amy Drescher-Crumpley along with approximately 55 additional volunteers to support our community. We have organized the volunteers into three groups: Bikur Cholim (meals, rides, visits, phone calls, etc.), Ozerim (bereavement, shivas), and Life Cycle events. It has been an active and successful year with engaged volunteers providing the following services to fellow congregants:

Meals: 55

Visits: 12

Rides/Errands: 10

Phone Calls: 5

Cards sent: 46

Shivas: 10

Other requests: 5

In addition to the above, we have hosted three cooking events to make meals that are kept in the temple freezer and a Lunch and Learn event to share information with our volunteers and other temple members on how to talk to people who have experienced a trauma or loss. We look forward to the upcoming year and will focus on continuing to spread the word throughout the congregation about the services we provide. Our goal is to continue reaching out and touching the lives of many more within our temple family who might need help. We will continue to actively recruit new volunteers and plan more programming to support the work of our volunteers. Oak Park Temple has always been a community of caring members with a history of being there for each other. We are grateful to Rabbi Weiss for encouraging us to organize and provide help for the congregation in a more structured way. The ongoing support of Rabbi and Cantor Green have enabled us to touch the lives of those within our temple family at the times that they may need us the most.

Chavurot

A Chavurah is a small group of individuals and families formed based on interest, proximity, demographics or other factors. There are many active and some not so active groups. Two recent groups were formed. An empty nest group hosted initially by Rochelle Tsachor has been very active. Another group of Longfellow School parents, assembled by Lucy Fox is successful. If you are interested in becoming part of a Chavurah or forming a new group please reach out.

Respectfully Submitted, Joyce Smoler

Chevra Kadisha (WSCK)

The West Suburban Chevra Kadisha is a progressive burial society made up of volunteers in our community who, upon request by the family, perform *tahara*. *Tahara* is ritual cleansing and dressing of the dead performed before burial in accordance with our tradition. Cantor Julie Yugend Green and Rabbi Robin Damsky founded the WSCK in 2013. It has grown to a group of approximately 45 active volunteers who are on call when *tahara* is requested. Our numbers have increased after successful and continued recruitment of men, as well as women, to perform this mitzvah. Recruitment and training of new volunteers continues.

In 2017 Cantor Green attended the national *Kavod v'Nichum* (honor and comfort) conference in San Rafael, California. She returned with fresh ideas from communities around the country who are finding the need to enhance education about the comfort and meaning *tahara* can bring.

For many, the practice and availability of *tahara* has not been widely known in liberal Jewish communities. For 2018, the WSCK will be reaching out to various groups within our own community to educate about *tahara* in smaller settings. To this end, we are revamping our promotional materials with new text, artwork, and active promotion of our work.

In addition to *tahara*, the WSCK is expanding its role to include local education through a national program, *The Conversation Project*, which addresses end of life concerns for all of us. On February 25, 2018, Oak Park Temple member (and professional actor and playwright) Neil Tobin will be performing his award winning theatrical piece *Near Death Experience* here as part of *The Conversation Project*. A facilitated discussion regarding end of life issues will follow the performance.

Communications Committee

- Provided communications support for **major events and initiatives**, including the retreat, the upcoming 2018 auction, the Caring Community, Chevra Kadisha and the Women's March on Washington.
- Set up a **blog** on our web site to track our progress with a Syrian refugee family sponsored by OPT.
- Supported OPT Board on revision of the OPT **Mission Statement**.
- Supported Membership Committee with content and design for the **New Membership Brochure**.
- Worked with Temple staff to explore and assess the viability of **ShulCloud** for web site management, event management and email in addition to current database management on the platform. Developed a 2018 **transition plan**.
- Developed a 2018 plan for bringing **The Messenger** in-house to reduce costs, simplify production, provide more timely information, and offer a digital alternative.
- Developed a 2018 plan for streamlining **email communications** and transitioning to weekly announcements.

Respectfully submitted, Lee Kantz & Karen Muriello

Derech Eretz

Derech Eretz (literally "the way of the land") is Oak Park Temple's Orientation / Leadership Development Program. The program consists of a series of workshops designed to ensure that members are well-informed about Oak Park Temple, the Reform Movement, and how we interact with the greater community in addition to preparing volunteers to lead our congregation into the future.

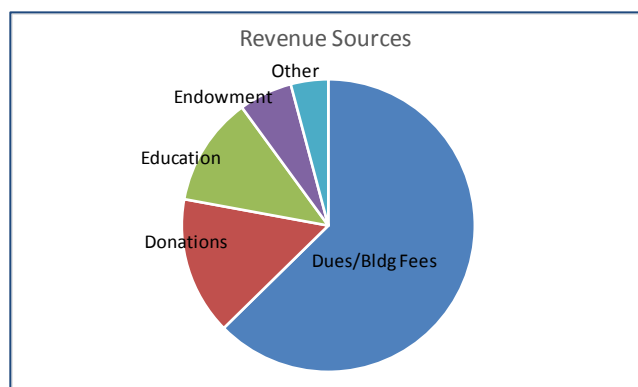
The 2017 class produced 3 participants, all who have taken an active role in the community. The committee is in the process of revamping the program to a 2 year cycle with anticipated workshops as well as hands on leadership projects. The new cohort will start January 2019.

Respectfully submitted, Brad Wainer

Development/Fundraising

At Oak Park Temple, we welcome all who wish to join our community regardless of financial means. With generous support from members of OPT who have donated beyond the standard amount or have given special gifts, we have continued to maintain and support this "open" dues structure. Maintaining what is a fundamental value of OPT has meant that in recent years we have been left with a gap between dues income and the money needed to keep up with programming, the needs of the membership and maintenance of our aging building. As a result, we have delayed building improvements and repairs rather than reduce the offerings of OPT.

The Board of Directors, mindful that not fully funding puts the sustainability of the OPT community at risk, approved a budget that requires an additional \$140,000 to \$160,000, or 15 to 18 percent, to fully meet the operating needs and building improvements required by the Temple. The chart below highlights that with nearly 70 percent of OPT's income provided by dues commitments and donations we need to focus on these two sources to meet the additional funding needs.



While annual commitment income grew, we are left with a gap to fill.

Annual Dues Commitment			Yom Kippur Appeal			Passover Appeal		
2016	2017	% change	2016	2017	% change	2016	2017	% change
951	997	5%	103	65	-37%	34	30	-12%

(Numbers in thousands)

On a much brighter note, we instituted a campaign to fund the hiring of an assistant rabbi. Given the challenge to meet operating needs, the Board of Directors felt it was prudent to fund this outside of the annual budget. Our target was to raise roughly \$600,000 to meet the financial commitment of a multi-year contract. With the generous support of the membership and a \$100,000 matching grant we have commitments to meet the target.

We also began working with an outside consultant, Partners in Effective Philanthropy, to assist with addressing the short term and long term financial goals of Oak Park Temple. An assessment of our individual donor program was recently completed by the consultants and the results will be used to implement an even more strategic approach to expanding the temple's individual donor base and plan for its long term sustainability.

We are grateful for your generosity and financial support of Oak Park Temple. As we move forward, we will continue to look for ways to close the funding gap.

Respectfully submitted, Sarah Lewensohn and Ali Mandell

Echad al Echad

Echad al Echad (literally "One to One") is our initiative designed to strengthen the bonds between Oak Park Temple and the Reform movement in Israel. Founded in 2007, Echad al Echad is a partnership between Oak Park and Kiryat Tivon, a town 20 miles east of Haifa and one of a few dozen communities in Israel with a Reform synagogue. That synagogue, Ma'alot Tivon, belongs to the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism.

The flagship activity of this sister congregation relationship is an annual summer teen exchange, where Oak Park Temple and Kiryat Tivon teens visit each other's city every other year. This year we completed our 5th cycle, the 10th year of the program.

Five teens and 1 adult traveled to Israel this summer. For 2 weeks, we lived with our host families, traveled around Israel and made wonderful connections. We visited Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, the upper Galilee and Haifa. To name a few things we did, we saw the Kotel, a crusader village, floated down the Jordan River, had wonder meals and great conversations. We celebrated Shabbat with Rabbi Zohar and the Reform community he serves in Tivon. The teens hung out and made some lasting connections.

We are in the process of meeting with families in the hopes of starting cycle 6 this summer with teens from Tivon being hosted in our community.

Respectfully Submitted, Amy Kaufman

Endowment Committee

As Chair of the Committee of Trustees of the Oak Park Temple Endowment Fund, I am pleased to present to our Congregation the annual report of the financial condition of the Endowment Fund as of December 31, 2017.

The investment portfolio with LaSalle St. Securities, L.L.C., as managed by Roberts, Glore & Co., had a year-end total of \$2,170,436. The Endowment Fund owns (just renewed) a \$100,000 State of Israel Bond. The 2017 year-end total balance of the Endowment Fund is \$2,270,436.

During the year, there were a number of contributions or other receipts to the Endowment Fund totaling \$89,472.67, including two \$5,000 enhancements of restricted endowments.

The value of the investment portfolio of the Endowment Fund is consistent with stock market conditions and is doing as well as might be expected. More contributions are needed to the Endowment Fund to enable it to be even more helpful to the Temple's annual budget.

The Committee of Trustees has in place a program to permit restricted donations so that interest can be used to fund specific programs, and there is also a legacy plan to help facilitate bequests to the Endowment Fund through wills and other estate planning documents. In September, the Endowment Fund paid earnings on the restricted funds for their various purposes in the total amount of \$6,442.

Under the contribution formula of five percent of the investment portfolio, at Passover the Committee of Trustees will present to the Congregation a contribution check in the sum of \$102,080, which takes into account the adjustment for Major Donor Restricted Endowments.

Sincerely,



Ronald Broida, Chairman of the Committee of Trustees of the
Oak Park Temple B'nai Abraham Zion Endowment Fund

Report of the Vice-President - Finance

As of the end of our fiscal year on June 30, 2017, the Temple's finances continue to be healthy. We maintained a comfortable level of cash in our operating fund by coming in ahead of budget by \$29,542, from a strong High Holiday appeal. We again managed to avoid any major capital expenditures, but we did move yet another year closer to the inevitable necessary modernization of our building. Several significant expenses, for example the carpeting in the community hall, are overdue.

OPT booked an operating cash surplus of just over \$20,000 last year, for the second year in a row. Still, it only partially covered the annual depreciation of our building. The annual endowment transferred to the operating fund was \$90,300, which is equivalent to paying suggested dues for 29 families. We have conservatively budgeted for a \$35,000 cash deficit in fiscal year 2017-2018, reflecting increased ongoing expenses of approximately \$40,000 above our expected increase in annual pledges from members.

This year, we will also be celebrating Cantor Green's golden anniversary at OPT. We expect contributions from the community to cover the relatively modest costs of the planned events, so party without fear!

Our fundraising committee has been very active, and they have made a separate report for the annual meeting. The highlight is that the committee, working with temple staff and membership, could secure commitments to fund an assistant rabbi position for a full three years.

This year, we also moved our membership management software to Shulcloud, making it easier both for members and for staff to manage everything from dues, to tuition, to current household information. This year will also be the first audit year with our new accounting firm, and we have added a permanent bookkeeper to the office staff.

Our balance sheet continues to be strong for a congregation of our size, with no mortgage, virtually no other long-term liabilities and total cash on hand at year end of \$552,000, of which \$70,000 is available for operations without restriction and \$135,000 is in the building improvement fund.

I have attached on the follow page, summaries of our FY 2017 year-end balance sheet and operating results.

Respectfully submitted, Aaron Lebowitz, Vice President, Finance

Oak Park Temple B'nai Abraham Zion
Summary Consolidated Profit and Loss Statement (Unaudited)
Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2017

	Ending Balance
Cash	\$ 552,387
Endowment Investments	\$ 1,994,143
Other Investments	\$ 167,182
Other Current Assets	\$ 83,424
Building, Land, Improvements and Fixtures	\$ 3,254,556
Less Accumulated Depreciation	-\$ 1,302,694
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$ 4,748,998</u>
Current Liabilities	\$ 19,205
OPT Endowment	\$ 1,974,263
Building Improvement Fund	\$ 135,178
Other Restricted Funds	\$ 482,214
Retained Earnings	\$ 2,138,138
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	<u>\$ 4,748,998</u>

OAK PARK TEMPLE BUDGET SUMMARY

Item	FY 2016-2017		FY 2017-2018
	Budget	Actual	Budget
	2016-2017	2016-2017	2017-2018
Sources of Funds			
BGPS Income	\$ 238,950	\$ 275,787	\$ 272,630
Camp Shalom Income	\$ 53,540	\$ 53,628	\$ 53,540
Dues	\$ 955,000	\$ 963,411	\$ 955,000
Endowment Transfer	\$ 85,000	\$ 90,300	\$ 98,000
Fund Raising	\$ 237,811	\$ 262,489	\$ 315,551
Member Services Income	\$ 33,500	\$ 37,640	\$ 35,000
Religious School Income	\$ 163,107	\$ 149,108	\$ 148,800
Total Sources	\$ 1,766,908	\$ 1,832,363	\$ 1,878,522
Uses of Funds			
BGPS Expense	\$ 239,250	\$ 276,466	\$ 272,630
Camp Shalom Expense	\$ 46,383	\$ 45,524	\$ 46,383
Office & Program Expense	\$ 248,950	\$ 260,008	\$ 285,463
Other Donations - expense	\$ -	\$ 4,825	\$ -
Salaries + Benefits	\$ 807,988	\$ 777,503	\$ 842,403
Building Expense	\$ 299,500	\$ 313,062	\$ 318,000
High Holiday Expense	\$ 12,000	\$ 13,382	\$ 13,500
Music	\$ 20,200	\$ 19,603	\$ 40,200
Religious School Expense	\$ 171,697	\$ 171,508	\$ 169,625
Total Uses	\$ 1,845,967	\$ 1,881,881	\$ 1,988,204
Net Sources over Uses	\$ (79,059)	\$ (49,518)	\$ (109,682)
Add Depreciation	\$75,000	\$69,996	\$75,000
Cash Surplus/(Shortfall)	(\$4,059)	\$20,478	(\$34,682)

Green Chaverim

The mission of the Green Chaverim is to fulfill the Jewish imperative of tikkun olam (repairing the world) by encouraging environmental stewardship within the congregation and promoting environmental awareness among the greater OPT community. The Green Chaverim promotes sustainable Temple operations to reduce its impact on the environment, provides outreach and education about local environmental issues, and engages congregants in projects to raise environmental awareness.

Reaching for Zero

The Green Chaverim added additional compost/recycle bins in the Rotunda, Community Hall, Kitchen and Lower Level and is working with committees and administration to create zero waste events.

Interfaith Green Network

The Green Chaverim represented Oak Park Temple as part of the Interfaith Green Network's Sustainability project. The Interfaith Green Network formed seven years ago to respond to the question of how area congregations could act on climate change. This faith based planning initiative aims to bring together congregations to fully realize the power of a collaborative action and a united voice.

Together our 16 area congregations green teams:

- Hosted a Native Garden Tour (featuring our own OPT native garden) for over 200 participants
- Negotiated with PADS/Housing Forward to eliminate styrofoam and convert to compostables at all sites
- Lobbied for a single use bag fee (and won); the new ordinance went into effect Jan 1, 2018

OPT Community Gardens

In our thriving community garden, volunteers planted and harvested pounds and pounds of fresh produce to share with the Oak Park Food Pantry. Complete with a squash arch, sunflowers, pole beans and more, the garden engaged young and old passers by and received many positive comments throughout the season.

Our Native Garden in the OPT parking lot along Harlem continues to take shape. With many plants donated from West Cook Wild Ones, OPT has put itself on the Wildlife Corridor as a way to increase biodiversity in OP/RF and serves as an important habitat for birds, bees and other wildlife. This garden was featured on the Native Garden Tour in August.

Earth Day:

On Earth Day 2017, Oak Park Temple sponsored a community event: The Interconnectedness of All Things on Earth: From Oak Park to the Amazon, How To Take Action on the Impending Climate Crisis.

This Earth Day Celebration included dinner, and a talk from climate experts, Amy Rosenthal of the MacArthur Foundation and Dr. Jason Funk of Center for Carbon Removal. About 90 guests attended and the event was written up in the Chicago Tribune.

Speaking of Green:

We hosted our very own Emily Paster, food blogger, cookbook author and OPT member, as she taught guests about preserving the harvest.

Respectfully submitted, Judy Klem

Membership and Community Committee

Oak Park Temple is a thriving and active community. The Membership Committee supports the congregation by providing outreach in the community, by linking new members to activities and committees they might enjoy, and by providing support to long time members as needed. In 2017, we worked on several new initiatives to enhance our membership outreach. We once again partnered with Glasser Preschool representatives to plan and staff the Oak Park Temple booth at Day in Our Village. Our major initiative as it is every year was The Annual Summer Shindig congregational picnic, which occurred on the first day of religious school, September 10th and was extremely well attended by both new and tenured congregation members. In addition, we revamped the new member brochure to focus on showing how welcoming and vibrant our community is here at Oak Park Temple. By revamping the brochure, we also aligned with our new website so new prospective members would see the same messaging and vision for membership whether they accessed us on-line or in person.

New member initial communication was also a major focus for us this year. We contacted all new members who had joined our community within the previous 12 months just to let them know how much we appreciate their commitment to our congregation. We also spent outreach time to get these new members input so we could leverage it on how we go about obtaining new members. This knowledge will be used to drive new membership activities and initiatives in 2018.

Respectfully submitted by Marc Imowitz, Membership Chair

Oak Park Temple Youth (OPTY)

OPTY current strengths:

- Very committed leadership from a few seniors.

- 2 very successful events this fall: temple lock-in and the Shedd trip. Both had around 20 teens.

- A very positive feel to the culture of the group.

Places for OPTY to grow:

- The group needs to better socially mix between the grades.

- To meet more consistently - in both meetings and events.

- Visibility within the congregation (though we are hoping to address this by taking a more prominent role in the Purim carnival).

Thank you for your continued support of youth at Oak Park Temple, and have a wonderful 2018.

Respectfully Submitted, Gideon Bob, Youth Group Leader

Glasser Preschool

Glasser Preschool offers half-day classes (both morning and afternoon) for children ages two to five years old. We have five classrooms which serve eight groups of children with over 70 children enrolled this school year. We also have a daily hot lunch program and enrichment class options every day of the week. Programs for parents and tots meet on Friday mornings throughout the school year. Glasser Preschool's summer camp, Camp Bet Yeladim, meets for 8 weeks during the summer.

Glasser Preschool is licensed through the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. We are also proud to be accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

We provide a fun, safe, caring environment where children can flourish and learn. Our curriculum is designed around the concept that children learn through play. Our classroom environment encourages children to make choices, develop a positive self-concept, and promote learning through experimentation and problem solving. Through play our children acquire skills in the five main developmental areas: Social and Emotional; Gross Motor; Fine Motor; Language & Communication; and Cognitive. Each area of the classroom and the activities that take place during the day are designed to help children acquire the necessary skills in these areas.

An important component of our daily curriculum is Jewish. Hebrew is being used daily in every classroom in our school. Not all of our children or families come from a Jewish background. Our staff is sensitive to this and we make every effort for our entire Glasser Preschool family to be comfortable with this part of our curriculum. Parent education newsletters are sent home throughout the year regarding the Jewish holidays and Hebrew used in the classroom. The school observes Jewish holidays and provides awareness of Jewish customs and traditions through play, drama, art, stories, and visits to the Chapel with Rabbi Weiss and Cantor Green. This year the staff is working on a deeper exploration of the Jewish holidays at monthly meetings led by Amy Kaufman. There is a balance between the Jewish calendar and concepts and the everyday lives and interests of the children of the class.

We are continuing to participate in a pilot program through the Collaboration for Early Childhood using ASQ developmental screening for all the children in our program. The ASQ screening is helping us in better address the individual developmental needs of the children in our program and helps formulate curriculum to address these needs.

In addition to all the methods we have used in the past to communicate with parents (classroom and school newsletters, weekly emails, notes on for individual children, hallway documentation) we are in the second year of using an electronic communication method called *Remini* which has been a huge success. Remini is a secure communications platform and application to share information with our families. Remini is an application you can access from your computer or download to your Smartphone or tablet/iPad. It enables teachers, the Director and families to share photos, messages, newsletters and more to tell the story of their children at our school.

We are proud to have such a fine group of dedicated teachers at Glasser Preschool. Many of our teachers are Oak Park Temple members including: Amy Kaufman, Ruth Milstein, Cathryn Weiss, Judy Weiss, and Jenna Wellner. This is Marci Sperling Flynn's twentieth school year as our full time Director. Marci is an active participant in the CFJE director group, Collaboration for Early Childhood Director

roundtables, and also serves on the national executive board of the ECE-RJ (Early Childhood Educators of Reform Judaism) as Vice President of Finance.

Parent involvement is important to The Glasser Preschool! All preschool parents are required to assist in at least two volunteer areas during the school year. Parents are also welcome in our classrooms to observe, help, and just enjoy seeing their child learn. We also provide opportunities for Glasser Preschool parents to socialize with other preschool parents. An active and hard working parent committee governs our preschool. Thank you for all the work they do to support our school: Leah Paskar & Jen Schneider (co-chairs); Amanda Zoloto (Treasurer); Beth Marshall (Secretary); Kara McDermott (Social/Fundraising); Becky Frank (Communications); Erin Dowdall (Community Outreach); Beth Sauers (Gift Card Coordinator) ; Representative to OPT Board (Carolyn Sherman); and (Members at large): Molly Bob, Brynne Gordon, Katie Karrow, and Kelly Riegler.

Tuition alone does not cover the expenses of running our high quality preschool so fund-raising activities are essential. Our fundraising activities this year include our annual walk-a-thon; our monthly gift card program (mandatory for all preschool families), Restaurant Benefit Days; family social activities, Ralph's World Concert; sales of spring flowers, Challah, Passover candy and Hammentashen; and of course the 2018 OPT/GPS Auction!

Registration for the 2018-2019 school year began for Oak Park Temple members on January 15th. Registration opens to the greater Community on January 29, 2018. We will be having an Open House on Monday evening January 22nd from 7 to 8 PM for prospective families.

Respectfully submitted, Marci Sperling Flynn Glasser Preschool Director

Religious School

The Religious School Committee is comprised of approximately 10 congregants with children of various ages that work in direct partnership with Robin Arbetman, Temple Education Director, to ensure the success of our educational programs. The committee strives to have a good mix of parents with various ages of children, which allows us to be a good sounding board for input with Robin throughout the school year for the various grade levels. The committee meets on the second Monday of each month at 7:30 pm at the temple.

2017 – 2018 has seen a larger 1st grade class and thus a 2nd teacher was hired. The committee discussed the underlying issues behind the downturn of kids entering the school. For example, the Gan class has 17 kids and should be 35.

The Hinsdale program: It was disrupted last year, because the church we were meeting at ended our verbal agreement in December with little notice. We moved into the Hinsdale Library temporarily.

Budget: We looked at an increase of 3% in the school fee. New software brought in for the temple (Shulcloud) allows us to streamline our registration and fee collection process, increase communication abilities for Robin, and may help families see their historical data and current payment status. The committee is now setting policy on Sunday lunches for 6th graders. Food costs had escalated to \$12,000 a year and there was a wish to reduce waste. The new menu rotation will save up to \$5,000.

Eyes and Ears: One of the important aspects of the committee member's responsibilities is to report during each meeting. Examples of this reporting include:

1. Teens did a great art project with Muslim teens going to the School of Rock. Gan and 1st graders did handprints.
2. The Mitzvah day was a huge success. Especially Josh from the innocence project for the 4th and 5th graders, but open to 7/8th graders. Josh brought in a family where the father had been wrongly imprisoned for 10 years and the wife had been briefly incarcerated and on probation. This related directly to the Torah portions kids had been learning about Jacob and Joseph.
3. Because we learned that there were some kids having anxiety from an impromptu conversation comparing President Trump's rise to power and the rise of the Nazi party in Germany (which was immediately recognized as inappropriate in this forum and was shut down) – the committee suggested to Robin to update parents how she was handling any related issues that arise and it was decided she could suggest a few books parents could get their teens to read (*Devil's Arithmetic and Remember the Stars*).

A mobile solution called "what's app" has been introduced for committee members to use for instantaneous thoughts and comments on programs to be shared with each other.

Programming: The tenth grade trip to DC was fantastic. The program was very engaging. Religious Action Center (RAC) has definitely improved the program over the past few years. The staff was young and energetic, while the leader brought the schedule to life. 10th grade Kabbalat Torah was amazing. 15 of 19 students showed up with wonderful speeches and a tribute to former teacher Shawn Gilley. There was an upswing (last year) in 7th/8th graders reporting anti-Semitism in their public schools. This came out in the conversation they had with the Anti Defamation League (ADL). This year the 4/5th grade will visit with the ADL (6th graders no immediate plan). 8th grade sessions focusing on antisemitism and were fully focused. 7th grade - tired of reading and sitting... Went with a project based program. Kids created in groups, a You Tube series, modeled on Degrossi High program from years back.

Madrichim program: A one-time grant was used for setting up a training sessions, with a part time leader for last year only. The program has become so successful that we had too many volunteers overloading classes. A new policy for 2018 – 19 school year has set 8th grade as the starting point for volunteering, but with any interested 7th graders going through a one-year training program.

Staffing: This year we hired an extra teacher for 1st grade and lost a Wednesday Hebrew aide at the last minute.

Camp Shalom: A new registration policy and attendance options were instituted this year to speed up early registration. We are offering registration by the week instead of multiple week sessions. The terms are 25% down payment with registration. Payment in full by April 1st receives a 10% discount off all fees. New policies are being worked on to reduce a 24% gap between budgeted and actual fees collected. We are also looking to work with the Temple Finance committee on changing the accounting process to acknowledge in-kind payments.

Youth Group: There became a need for a new adult leader. A subcommittee was created, the position was advertised in several mediums. Interviews were done over the summer and the final choice was Gideon Bob.

Task Force: the final report was turned over to the committee last January. Robin moved forward on hiring an inclusion coordinator to assist teachers dealing with disruptive classroom situations and children with special needs. We revamped the classroom behavior book used over the last few years. Two issues we will look at rigorously are 1) instructional support and 2) providing coaching and family engagement (options may include additional trips, more family classes, and teacher conferences). Robin did polling on the timing of Wednesday programs. Task force issues are now a standing agenda item.

Inclusion Coordinator: This is funded by a \$10,000 grant for a coordinator from the CFJE. Ben Goldberg was hired, he is highly qualified. Ben is making quick headway and making recommendations on how to adopt a course of action that works with students before a family is involved. His days of work will be Sundays and some Wednesdays, but a part-time aide was hired for Wednesdays when Ben isn't there.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Robin Arbetman, Temple Educator
Randy Gillett, Chairman Religious School Committee*

Shure Memorial Library

In the past year, the library has continued to acquire new books (about 50 new titles were added in 2017). We've purchased books written by authors who have spoken at the temple. Some written by authors who are temple members have been kindly donated by others in our congregation. The temple library supports the Women of Oak Park Temple Book Club by providing a copy of the selected books to make it available to its book club members.

Bob Karrow catalogs new books and makes pockets, cards, and spine labels for them. He and Edna Hamburger then put protective plastic covers on the books. All of the circulating materials can be checked out for two weeks. Edna and Eileen update the "date due" cards each week and shelve returned items. If a temple member wants to keep the material for longer than two weeks, we will renew the item at the member's request. If it is kept longer than the date due, and it has not been renewed, Helen Fleisher will send out an overdue notice.

Eileen Matthies is in charge of the mail and asks Danielle to renew expired periodicals. She is also listed as the committee's contact person.

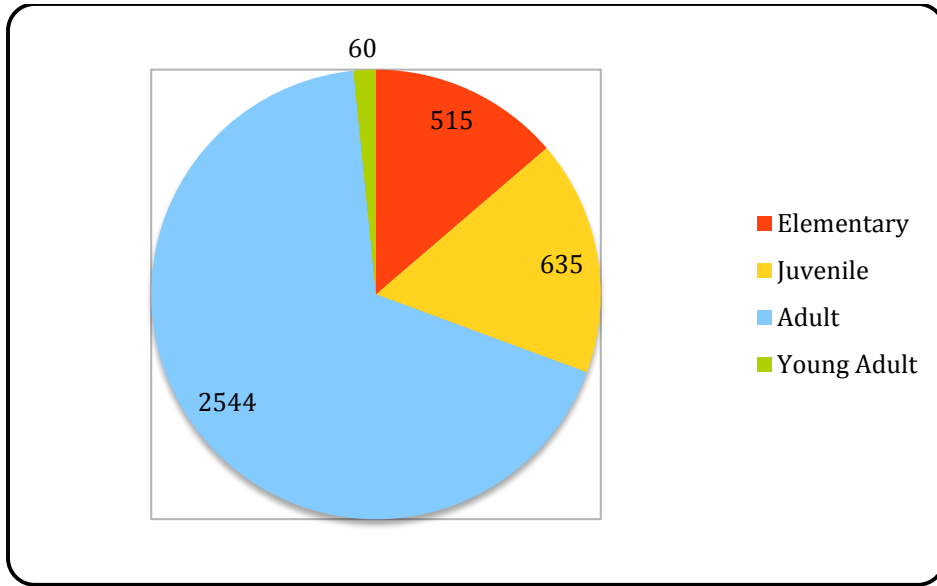
We continue to circulate our holdings. A few of the Sunday School teachers consistently use the children's collections for their classes. Some of the Sunday morning Adult Torah Study Groups will also borrow books. Several people spend time in the library on Sunday mornings while their children are in class, and we're pleased that they are doing so. We invite each temple member to drop in, browse the shelves, and check out the books, CD's, periodicals, and a few DVD's that have been donated. We also encourage Sunday School teachers to bring their students to the library to check out books.

If you make a donation to the temple in honor or in memory of a loved one, please consider earmarking it for the library fund.

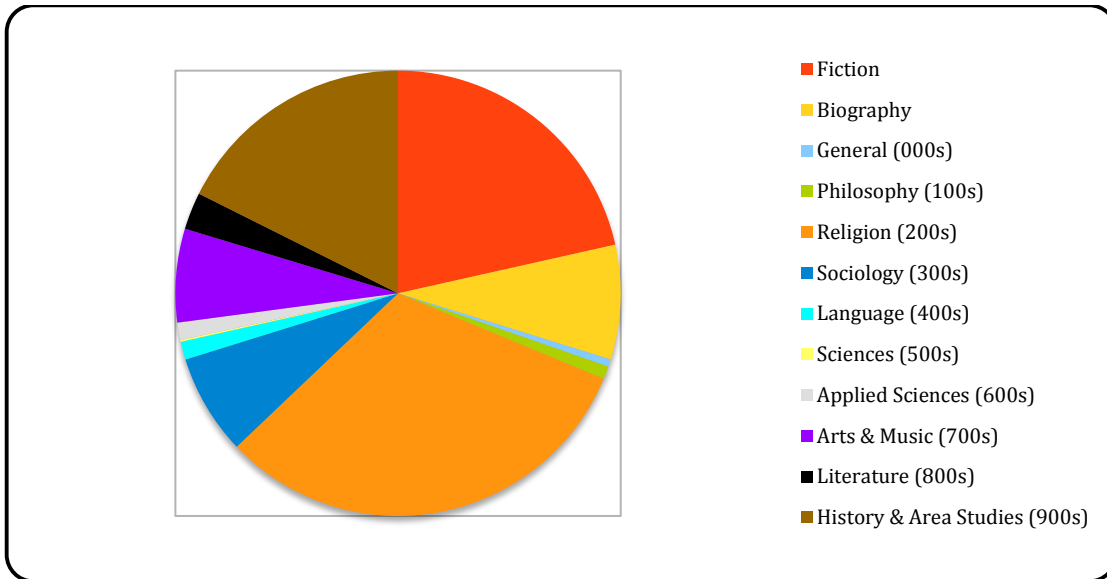
If a temple member would like to suggest books to purchase, we'll certainly consider doing so if they can be obtained.

Bob made a good suggestion that we'll try to implement starting in 2018. We would like to find a way of keeping track of our circulation.

Our collection currently includes about 3,900 titles, in a variety of formats (books, maps, magazines, DVDs, CDs, sheet music, etc.), serves a broad range of readers, and covers a wide variety of subjects, all with a more or less Jewish focus. The following charts summarize these holdings.



Titles, by Intended Audience



Titles, by Broad Subject Areas

Social Action Committee

The Social Action Committee was engaged in a variety of actions and initiatives this past year.

Ongoing projects included Project Sandwich, which collected and delivered between 150 and 200 lunches per month for the Outreach Mission in Chicago, and hosting of Housing Forward (formerly PADS), which provided meals and overnight shelter to homeless individuals once a week.

Margaret Rohter led the organization of our annual hat, glove, and scarf collection for the Midwest Workers Association. With her hard work and a boost from a joint Oak Park Temple / Muslim Leadership Academy service project, we exceeded last year's collection.

Our annual Mitzvah Day was organized by Annika Rothbaum, Allison Cowett and Christen Hammersley and was held during Martin Luther King weekend. The greater OPT community and the whole Religious School participated in a record number of service projects led by an impressive group of volunteers. The projects included:

- Project Sandwich- making lunches for the homeless
- Caring Community lasagna assembly- making meals for community members in need
- Green Chaverim and 6th grade/SoleHope- repurposing jeans into shoes to be sent to Africa to help the wearers prevent painful foot infections
- Midwest Workers Association- letter writing for winter survival campaign
- Gan and 1st grade/Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society- American flag art project welcoming new immigrants
- 2nd grade/Ozerim- Assembly of ready to cook soup packets for community members in need
- 3rd grade/Sarah's Inn- Assembly of gift bags for women affected by domestic violence
- 4th and 5th grade/Exoneration project- Presentation by wrongfully convicted individuals, letter writing to wrongfully convicted individuals who remain incarcerated
- 10th grade/Ronald McDonald House- prepare a meal for families at the house
- OPTY/Muslim Leadership Academy/Suburban Unity Alliance- create a public art installation promoting unity and diversity

The day was a huge success. We look forward to community wide involvement again this coming year.

We continued our partnership with the Muslim Leadership Academy for two different "Evening of Sadaqah / Tzedakah" get-togethers in 2017. In May, members of OPT and MLA gathered at the Islamic Foundation mosque in Villa Park. The topic of discussion was "*Being a Muslim/Jewish Minority in Today's America*". Participants shared dinner and studied texts from the Torah and Quran. The evening concluded with an activity of assembling toy-filled gift bags for children staying at the Ronald McDonald house. At the second event in December, OPT and MLA met at Oak Park Temple. Attendees again shared dinner, and discussed what it means in our respective texts and traditions to love our neighbors and care for their needs. The tzedakah project involved gift wrapping winter hats, gloves and scarves for the Midwest Workers Association annual collection. This project has been ongoing since the summer of 2015 and this year earned an Irving J Fain Award from the Religious Action Center, an award which honors URJ congregations doing exemplary social justice work. You will find more details of the project and a list of other Fain award winners on the RAC website: <https://rac.org/2017-fain-award-winners>. We are indebted to Shari Schindler for the nomination and to Alexandra Levit for drafting the application.

Throughout the year, we continued working with RefugeeOne to co-sponsor a Syrian refugee family as they resettled in Chicago. Over the past year, the Almadani family has faced many challenges, and we continue to marvel at their resilience. Father, Talal, is working fulltime. Mother, Nawar, is excelling in ESL classes at Truman College, and amazing anyone who visits the family home with her incredible cooking. The children are thriving. Alaa, the eldest who has special needs is in school and getting the services she requires. Mohamad, Baian and Esra are speaking nearly fluent English. Several members of the OPT community mentored the family and tutored the children in their school work weekly throughout the year. There were numerous home visits, apple picking, visits to the zoo, shared meals and more. And while the formal co-sponsorship commitment has come to an end, members of the community continue to be in close contact with the family. We celebrated their year anniversary in the United States with a recent dinner in their honor at the Bernstein home.

Finally, this year members of the committee along with Rabbi Weiss joined Reform Illinois, a coalition of Reform congregations throughout Illinois committed to social justice and social change and sponsored by RAC. We look forward to working with Reform Illinois in the coming year to identify initiatives for future focus of our work.

For 2018, Allison Cowett will serve as the committee chair and representative to the Board of Directors.

*Respectfully submitted, Allison Cowett
Chair, Social Action Committee*

STAR Suburban Thursday Afternoon Retirees

Suburban Thursday Afternoon Retirees, better known as STAR, meets every Thursday at West Suburban Temple Har Zion from 1-3, except on Jewish and National holidays. Our vibrant group continues to thrive with diverse attendees from Oak Park Temple, West Suburban Temple and the broader community. Men and women with diverse backgrounds, ages and interests attend regularly. The men have begun to bond and have a monthly lunch out.

This joint endeavor has continued most successfully for many years and offers a place for candid discussions on various topics and issues. We socialize, discuss, offer support to a part of the Jewish community that is often overlooked when it comes to programming and caring. The programming is as diverse as the participants.

A sampling of the programs this past year have been very interesting, ranging from Green Towns USA: A New Deal, Jumping Over Shadows: A Memoir, Transgender Identity 101, Angels in Judaism, Growing up Jewish in Iran, Biblical Imaging in Renaissance Italy, Eleanor Roosevelt portrayal, a mother's memoir growing up Jewish in Cuba from 1928 - 1942, The Midwest Landscape in Art, The Death Gap: How Inequality Kills, and several movies. We have discovered our own movie maven and have seen wonderful films.

We are grateful to our speakers, members of both Temples and members of STAR, as well as professionals from our various local institutions and Jewish Organizations. Our speakers are not paid and graciously give us their time and expertise to stimulate our mature adult population. We continue to partner with Rush Oak Park Hospital, Dominican University, Concordia University, Brookdale,

Oak Park and River Forest Townships, Arbor West Neighbors, Jewish Child & Family Services and more.

We continue to be grateful to the Chicago Symphony and Maestro Muti for having us as guests for free previews.

We at STAR feel like a small community learning and growing, feeling comfortable and engaged in learning and caring individually and communally.

Respectfully submitted

Sandra Sokol

Women of Oak Park Temple

The WoOPT provide a variety of programming and services to the Oak Park Temple community.

In 2017, events included:

- Our annual member brunch, featuring Roz Varon. Ms. Varon discussed her battle with breast cancer and her new book, "On the Road with Roz: Adventures in Travel and Life"
- An evening with Maggie Anton discussing sex in the Talmud
- A sisterhood led Women's Seder
- Running the Judaica shop, including the annual Maccabee market blowout sale
- The beginning of Rosh Chodesh meetings, celebrating the new moon
- A visit by WRJ Area director Andi Blaine, and honoring of WoOPT lifetime members
- A successful annual temple rummage sale
- A fun Bingo night fundraiser
- A New Years greeting which brings in money for OSRUI
- A continuation of our college gift box program

WoOPT looks forward to continuing and strengthening our service to the temple community in 2018.

Respectfully submitted,

Lauren Levrant, President, Women of Oak Park Temple

Amelia Topel-Hardy, Board Representative

Worship Committee

The worship committee had some exciting activities this year:

1. We purchased hard cover copies of the prayer book for Slichot generously donated by funding from the sisterhood.
2. The board is committed to having a greeter at Shabbat services to make a more welcoming and secure place to pray.
3. The committee, in accordance with Cantor Green, Rabbi Weiss and the board sold the organ up in the loft in order to update and go forward with our music. We also are entertaining bringing the choir down to the first floor in front of the sanctuary to bring our music closer to the congregation.
4. We are working on the logistics of High holy day services in order to make ushers and congregants have a smoother, more meaningful experience.
5. It is our intention to meet quarterly to discuss worship and ritual within our community.

The Worship Committee is continuously working with Rabbi Weiss and Cantor Green to make improvements in our worship services and programming, and we always welcome comments and suggestions from the Oak Park Temple community.

Respectfully submitted, Jimmy Korshak, Chair, Worship Committee