Temple Sinai provides us community. It offers us a way to find meaning through Jewish learning and prayer. We come together to perform acts of loving kindness and to make the world more just. The last thing most of us want to think about when we think about Temple Sinai is money and finance.

So why are asking you to approve SinaiPromise, a new approach to how we provide financial support for the Temple, at a special meeting of the membership on Sunday, January 23rd.

Because we believe SinaiPromise (our name for a model known as “voluntary dues”) is more consistent with who we are as a community, reflecting the values of inclusion and of being a kehilla shel chesed, a caring community. As the president of another Temple that adopted this model wrote to me, “When you shift to a voluntary system, you have the opportunity to move from the stick to the carrot, from punitive to encouraging, and from being a closed "club" that people have to pay to join and then expect certain benefits from to a community to which they belong and value.” Another president wrote that he knew they made the right decision after their Temple made the transition to this model when a member wrote to him and said: "Before switching, I had to go to the executive director and ask for reduced dues. It felt [humiliating]. Now, instead of paying less than what I am supposed to pay, I pay what I'm able to pay. That makes such a difference."

What is SinaiPromise?

In our current dues system, members who are unable to pay full dues have to request a remission (a reduction in dues). With SinaiPromise, members no longer need to request a remission. Each June, Temple Sinai will notify all its members what the Temple’s total budget will be for the coming year (July-June) and what the “sustaining amount” is that each household would need to pay for Temple Sinai to be able to support its staff, maintain the building, and provide programming. Each member household then will pledge how much they commit to paying for the year. What you pay becomes entirely your decision. If your circumstances allow and you wish to enable the Temple to be more inclusive and have a greater capacity for engagement, larger contributions are welcome and encouraged. Indeed, some contributions in excess of the sustaining amount are needed to enable us to welcome all those who wish to join. Conversely, if your circumstances or your priorities change you may simply let us know your intention and contribute less without having to request a remission.

This approach has been implemented in dozens of Temples across the country, with almost all showing stability or small gains in revenue and membership. As reflected in the comments above, these Temples also report a strongly positive impact of the change on the culture of their community.

Many more details on this approach are available in the “Frequently Asked Questions”
document available in the Member Documents section of ShulCloud. You can also reach out to any of the members of the task force that has been planning this transition with questions you may have.

Please come and participate in our special meeting of the Temple membership on January 23rd in person or by zoom, https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88468272146?pwd=ZDZIbjJxNDI2QnpWbVRxd0paaC9Ldz09 to vote on whether to approve moving to SinaiPromise beginning July, 2022. I hope you will vote in favor of this innovative model that will better align our membership model with our values.

**Charlie Homer** on behalf of the SinaiPromise Task Force:
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Linda Katz
Mike Klau
Larry Marks
Scot Osterweil
Mel Stoler
Bob Thurer