

## **Ritual Committee Annual Report 2008-2009**

The responsibilities of the Ritual Committee are several and varied and this past year has been both challenging and rewarding. Below is a summary of the Committees' major responsibilities and a summary of its work over the past year.

### **1. Working with the Rabbi, consulting and advising on matters of Jewish practice**

Discussion and debate about issues ranging from the Temple's policy regarding gay and lesbian marriage and commitment ceremonies to considering special requests for bar and bat mitzvah ceremonies that vary from general Temple policy. The committee also discussed the pros and cons of a live web cast of our Friday night musical services.

### **2. Organizing Shabbat and holiday observance**

Scheduling both members of the Board to act as Shabbat ushers and the Kabbalat Panim volunteers to act as greeters on Shabbat, organizing the Seudah on the first Shabbat of every month. The Seudah begins with the Mincha service on Saturday afternoon followed by a light dinner, a study session and a Havdalah service to mark the end of Shabbat. Committee members are also responsible for organizing programs that take place during other holiday celebrations such as Hoshanna Rabba and Simchat Torah.

### **3. Reviewing High Holiday services and recommending ways to improve them**

The conduct of High Holiday services is a central concern of the clergy and the Committee. They are the most important contact that many members have with the Synagogue during the year. The Committee undertakes an annual review of all aspects of the High Holiday services and reports its findings to the clergy in an effort to identify those things that enhance the experience for members and those areas where changes might be considered. Want to make Yom Kippur a more personally spiritual experience? Try wearing a kittel – a simple garment of pure white. Symbols and practice are important, and the wearing of a kittel is an act that can make the experience of fasting and prayer on Yom Kippur more powerful.

### **4. Shabbat Greeters – Kabbalat Panim**

This is a relatively new program run by the Ritual Committee that involves volunteers acting as Temple greeters before and after Shabbat services on Friday nights and Saturday mornings. Most of our volunteers are not members of the Board of Directors or even members of the Ritual committee. They perform an important function in making those who attend our Shabbat services feel welcome in our congregation.

If you are interested in any of these areas and would like to join the committee or volunteer to help in any of its activities, we welcome your participation.

Respectfully submitted,

JEFF GLASER  
VP Ritual

