

New Plans for the New Year

by
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The New Year is a time when we look forward to new beginnings and, in keeping with that sentiment, I have called for three new initiatives in our congregation for the coming year.

1. I am proposing a change in how we receive members at Ohev, recommending that we raise our congregation's Jewish profile by linking full membership for non-Jews to Tikkun's *halachic* concept of *K'rov Yisrael* – those who are “called by God to have a unique and permanent joining to the Messianic and wider Jewish communities ...” I recently gave a *Shabbat* message describing my proposal, and have invited written input from Ohev's current members who will be grandfathered in regardless of what changes will be made. I expected that by now I would have been deluged by comments, but I have not. Please listen to my message if you have not already done so, and remember that this is your opportunity to participate in a very important congregational decision.

2. I have asked that planning begin to develop a curriculum for the women and girls of the congregation called “Jewish Home and Family,” that will include (not in the order of their importance) subjects such as:

- Customs & traditions
- Holiness & purity
- Traditional Jewish values
- Bible & *Siddur* Literacy
- History & culture
- Domestic arts & crafts
- Foods & their preparation
- Family *Shabbat*
- Feasts & Celebrations
- Devotions & Prayer
- Community life
- *Tzadaka*
- Wifely duties to husbands
- Bringing up children
- Personal growth

These subjects and others like them will be woven into and addressed in the various venues that already exist at Ohev such as the *Shabbat* adult education, the various *chavurot*, the women's Bible studies, messages from the *bimah*, teachings to the youth, sisterhood events, etc., and we will be looking for Jewish-oriented teachers of these subjects (mostly women) who are both knowledgeable and spiritual. I have asked that a core of leadership women be assembled to begin designing the program and curriculum, so keep tuned for more about this in a few weeks.

3. I already wrote to our members about this one; it is the development of a cadre of Feast & Event Planning Specialists. It represents a change from there being a committee that is

responsible for all of the feasts. Instead, individuals and groups of two or three will adopt certain feasts and life-cycle events in which they already are or else will become experts, so that as their event approaches, they will confer with the elders and begin planning for it well ahead of time. There are already Ohev members functioning in this way and we want them to continue, although they may need some help. An Event Calendar Coordinator will keep up with the teams of specialists and help us avoid scheduling conflicts. I have already received some good ideas for event categories as well as offers of participation, and would like to hear from more of you.

October 2009