



RODEF SHALOM
CONGREGATION

Congregational Survey 5768

Executive Summary

Background

In honor of Rodef Shalom Congregation's 150th Anniversary, and in preparation for the next 150 years of our congregation, the Lifelong Synagogue Membership Committees of the Board of Trustees began last fall to prepare a survey in order to

- **better understand our members' needs**, desires and points of view,
- **set a consistent benchmark** that could be used in future years to measure our progress toward meeting those needs,
- **better inform planning efforts** by the Board and its Committees, the Rabbis and Staff, and to
- **ask congregants questions relevant to the times**, such as this year's questions about Special Needs and Interfaith Families.

With the help of Terry Beggy, a well-known nonprofit consultant, and Chris Benton, Rodef Shalom's Communications Director, the Membership Committees designed the survey instrument and mailed or emailed it to every adult member of the congregation in January 2008.

The responses are summarized in the following sections. This report also provides a historical cross-reference on several questions which are similar in nature to questions contained on a congregational survey completed in 2003 prior to the search for our Senior Rabbi. Since 1930, there have been four congregational surveys, of various designs and purposes, but all part of our congregation's ongoing efforts to better serve our members.

The comments provided in the Appendix are not the total comments provided by respondents. Those comments that addressed specific individuals were excluded and provided only in summary form to the Chairs of the Membership Committees.

A Sacred Contract: She'elot Uteshuvot

Throughout history, as Rabbi Sharyn Henry informed us, rabbis have provided written responses, answers to questions on individual issues of observance, practice and belief. It is a long-standing

tradition that Jews submit questions (she'elot) to noted rabbinic scholars, whose responsa (teshuvot) conveyed learned opinions as to the correct interpretations of Jewish law (halacha) and tradition on the issues at hand.

So, in our tradition, asking questions and getting answers becomes a kind of sacred contract between the one who asks and the one who answers. We must be careful who we ask and we must listen to the answers carefully. This survey is an important tool, but it should also be considered a sacred contract: **we asked our members questions, and they, with faith that they would be listened to, answered.**

Implementation

In January 2008, 1079 surveys were mailed to congregants and 717 congregants received their survey via e-mail. **414 surveys were returned for an overall response rate of 23%.** 181 or 44% completed the survey online. **This is an excellent response rate for a “membership” organization.**

There were 1360 individual comments included in the surveys; an unprecedented number of comments. As you read the comments, you may have a sense of being overwhelmed with the number and diversity of comments. We are all members of Rodef Shalom but we are not all alike! This **diversity of thought provides strong competing perspectives on a number of the questions and will therefore impact the changes that might be considered moving forward.**

Key Findings

- While a large number of our members have been members for over 25 years, **we have made strides in attracting new members.**
- **Having a place to celebrate the High Holy Days is among the top four reasons members join (#2 reason) and remain (#1 reason) members.**
- Most respondents (92%) felt that Temple’s programs are meeting their needs.
- Over 70% of non-Jewish spouses attend Temple functions.
- **82% of recently-affiliated (10 years or less) members said the opportunities to help them feel part of the congregation have been ‘about right.’**
- **20% of respondents indicated that they or a family member have a special need that limits participation.** Age-related needs were cited often but not exclusively.
- Respondents were **equally passionate about wanting less Hebrew in services** (more classical Reform tradition) **AND wanting more Hebrew in services** (more traditional Jewish ritual).
- The current **dues structure was a concern** for “bookend members” – those in early adulthood and those who are, as one respondent indicated, “in their golden years.”
- **77% of respondents indicated they would recommend that a friend or family member join Rodef Shalom.**

Rodef Shalom has transformed itself many times in the past 150 years. The survey responses indicate that **our congregation's leaders needs to continue to develop ways to identify potential changes, test them, and then determine whether to implement them or not** based on members reactions while at the same time considering the changes taking place nationally in the Reform Judaism movement. **All of this while a number of our members indicated that they do not welcome any change in the services at Rodef Shalom!**

Based on the findings from the survey, the Lifelong Synagogue Membership Committees recommend that the congregation focus its planning efforts in the following four areas:

1. **Members with special needs and their caregivers**
2. **Dues structure**
3. **Welcoming**
4. **Worship**

Next Steps

- On May 12, a **focus group session** with approximately 30 members was held to expand and clarify upon the information gathered from the survey. Several excellent suggestions came out of the break out sessions and some are already being implemented.
- **Share consolidated results** with members at June 20 Annual Meeting in as many forums and publications as possible. Include summary data on the web site for easy access by committees and the general membership.
- **Incorporate survey findings** into Board planning retreat on July 2 and disseminate to Board Committees for inclusion in their planning processes and action plans.
- **"Drill down" in the survey data** to determine if there are subgroups at temple with particular issues or needs that are not being met or could be addressed better.
- As changes are implemented and suggestions are acted upon, insure that the information is shared with members AND that it is **clearly communicated to members that the changes are a direct result** of input received in this survey.

Thank you to all the members of the congregation, Board, staff and clergy who assisted us in the survey process. Your efforts were essential and much appreciated,

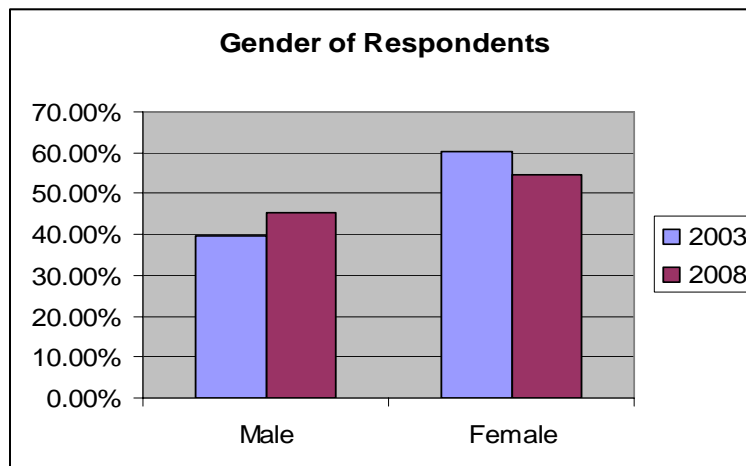
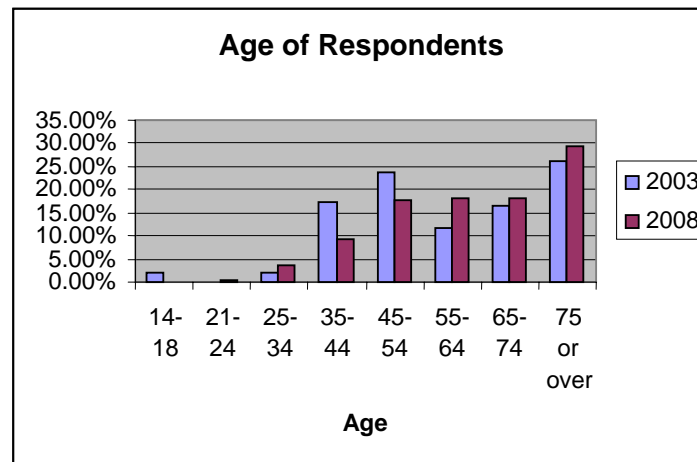
Sandy Rosen and Sarah Wertheimer
Lifelong Synagogue Membership Committee

The Congregational Survey 5768

Demographics of the Respondents

In the 2003 survey, 155 of the 156 survey respondents answered the questions of age and gender and in 2008, 399 respondents answered the questions. The chart confirms what many involved with the work of the congregation have said: **a large percentage of the membership is over age 55 and the congregation as a whole is getting older**. And as one might expect, more of the

older congregants are women. In 2008, 60.46% of the respondents are women and 39.5% are men.

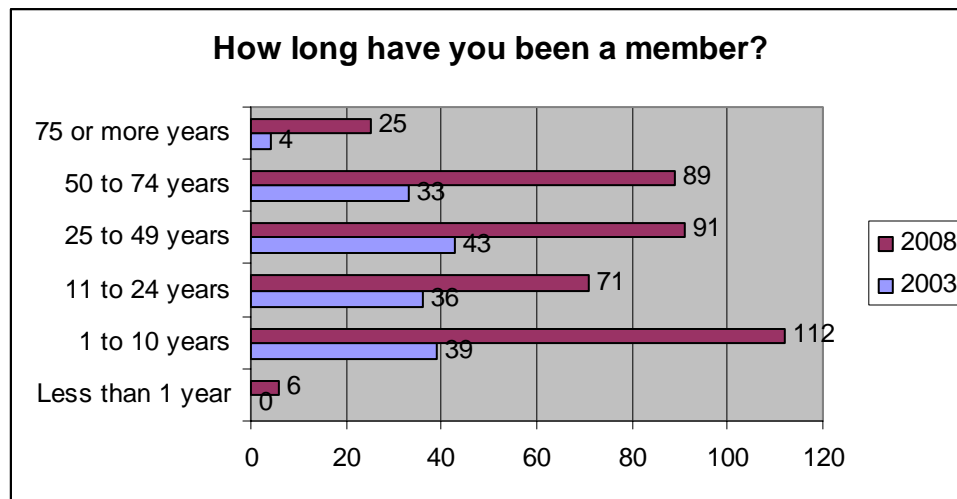


For consideration:

- There is a clear understanding with the member engagement and member retention committee chairs that efforts need to be made to attract and retain members, especially those under the age of 45 and their families. There was not, however, a suggestion or proposal that came to light through this survey that would provide an actionable plan. There were at least 10 respondents who indicated that they were members because of the preschool or for the education of their child. There were one or two suggestions that if the dues for younger families would be lowered, it might attract more of them to Rodef Shalom or to stay after their child has completed his/her education. Both points worth additional consideration – neither one providing a clear mandate. Getting data on dues structures at other synagogues in the region might enable more informed discussions on any proposed changes to the dues structure.

Length of membership: 'recently affiliated' or longer-time' member?

In 2008 we asked this question in a somewhat different format than we did in 2003. Below is a comparison of those two sets of results. In 2008, approximately the same number of respondents indicated they have been a member between 1 and 10 years (28.4%) as have been a member more than 50 years (28.9%). From the 2003 survey, we find that 25% of the respondents have been members under 10 years and 23% have been members 50 or more years.



The next questions are based on the length of time the respondent has been a member of the congregation. Questions 6, 7 and 8 were to be answered by members who consider him/herself to be 'longer time' member.

6. For Respondents who have been 'longer time' members, Have you been able to meet newer Temple members?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		31.8%	98
No		33.1%	102
Somewhat		35.1%	108
<i>answered question</i>			308

7. If you answered "No" or "Somewhat" to the above question, would you be interested in attending an event to help new members socialize with longer time members?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	44.0%	91
No	56.0%	116
<i>answered question</i>		207

8. Since you joined has your involvement in Temple activities?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Increased	39.1%	124
Decreased	22.1%	70
Remained the same	38.8%	123
<i>answered question</i>		317

For consideration:

- While slightly more than half of the respondents indicated they **would not be interested** in attending an event to help integrate new members; **almost 100 longer-term members indicated they would be willing to do so**. This is a large enough pool to draw from to find ways to be even more welcoming to new and relatively new members.
- Some options to consider might be pairing a longer-term member with a newer member so that there is a connection beyond staff or their immediate friends; host some sort of an orientation session to find out directly what attracted them to Rodef Shalom and what they are hoping to gain/achieve through their membership (this could be connected in some way to the New Member Shabbat).

Questions 9, 10 and 11 were to be answered by members who consider him/herself to be 'recently affiliated' member.

9. Do you feel a part of Rodef Shalom?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
	Yes	65.6%	179
	No	5.5%	15
	Somewhat	28.9%	79
<i>answered question</i>			273

10. How much opportunity has there been to help you feel a part of the congregation?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
	Too much	4.4%	11
	About Right	81.7%	206
	Not Enough	13.9%	35
<i>answered question</i>			252

The responses to Questions 9 and 10 provide some level of confirmation that the **steps in place to be welcoming** to new members and provide them an effective orientation to Temple and the services and programs offered **is working for the majority of newer members**.

11. What has been most helpful to you in becoming integrated in the Temple community?	
<p>My Own Volunteering (Sisterhood, Brotherhood, Committees, Trustee) = 29 Child(ren) and family programming = 23 Attending Services = 14 (mostly Friday Night Services) Rabbis = 12 (caring, there in time of need, fabulous services) Other Members, friends = 12 Staff = 7 Because I was personally asked = 6 Interfaith welcome = 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>For the remainder of the comments, see the Appendix.</i></p>	
<i>answered question</i>	
171	

The comments provided to Question 11 seem to confirm again, that **when members are actively involved with friends, family and other congregants, they feel more connected and integrated to the community.** The efforts extended by the staff and other congregants to help newer members integrate, has paid off based on the responses to Question 11.

For consideration:

- How systematic is the process to support newer members becoming active in the work of the congregation? How are newer members identified and tracked during their first 6-12 months as members to encourage and steer them toward active participation (whatever that means for them)? Has the process been documented and ‘institutionalized’ so that as committee and staff members change over time, the process still results in the successful outcomes of engaged new members?

Children under 18 in the home:

We asked respondents to indicate the number of children under the age of 18 in their home. The data from the 2003 survey is not available for this question. **177 respondents answered** this question and the breakdown is shown below. Note that more than one parent in a member family could have responded.

Ages of children under 18 in the household	
Under age 1 = 8 children	10 years old = 11 children
Age 2 = 13 children	11 years old = 8 children
Age 3 = 4 children	12 years old = 15 children
Age 4 = 6 children	13 years old = 9 children
Age 5 = 9 children	14 years old = 12 children
Age 6 = 5 children	15 years old = 13 children
Age 7 = 10 children	16 years old = 13 children
Age 8 = 11 children	17 years old = 9 children
Age 9 = 9 children	18 years old = 1 child
Total number of children of respondents under 18 is: 146	

These results tie to at least two questions in this year’s survey: Question #2 which asks the 3-4 most important reasons why the respondent joined Rodef Shalom and Question # 3 which asked the 3-4 reasons why the respondent remains a member. Combining these two questions, 6% answered the school and almost 35% answered life cycle events. Verbatim comments in these sections highlighted the school, preschool and Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

1. Within the past 12 months have you attended?					
	No	Yes, attended 1-3	Yes, attended 4-9	Yes, attended 10 or more	Response Count
Daily Service	85.8% (279)	11.1% (36)	2.5% (8)	0.6% (2)	325
Regular Shabbat Service (Erev Shabbat or Shabbat Morning)	28.5% (106)	25.0% (93)	19.6% (73)	26.9% (100)	372
Levy Hall Minyan Service	79.9% (247)	12.3% (38)	6.8% (21)	1.0% (3)	309
L'Dor v'Dor Service	85.1% (252)	12.5% (37)	2.4% (7)	0.0% (0)	296
Tot Shabbat Service	84.4% (254)	7.6% (23)	4.7% (14)	3.3% (10)	301
High Holy Day Services	10.2% (40)	68.3% (267)	18.2% (71)	3.3% (13)	391
Special Holiday Services (Simchat Torah, Sukkot, Purim, Passover, etc.)	43.4% (150)	48.3% (167)	6.1% (21)	2.3% (8)	346
<i>answered question</i>					407

In the 2003 survey we asked a somewhat similar question:

How often do you personally attend religious services at Rodef Shalom?		
2-3 times per year	13	8.55%
4-11 times per year	71	46.71%
Once a month	15	9.87%
Several times a month	53	34.87%
	152	

These results track with the results shown in both Question 2 and Question 3 from the 2008 survey – **most members (more than 2/3) attend High Holy Day services and Special Holiday services and attendance at these services is among the top four reasons members have joined (# 2 reason) and remain (#1 reason) members.**

2. Check the three or four most important reasons why you joined Rodef Shalom. (* You may choose a maximum of 4).

		Response Percent	Response Count
Religious practices	# 4 reason	36.1%	144
Interfaith acceptance		16.3%	65
Child's education		27.3%	109
Life cycle event (Bris, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Marriage, etc.)		23.8%	95
Meet other Jewish people		18.0%	72
Have a place for the High Holy Days	# 2 reason	39.3%	157
Building facilities and resources		8.8%	35
Professional staff		4.2%	17
Family history	#1 reason	48.6%	194
The Rabbi(s)	#3 reason	38.3%	153
The times and location of the school		3.0%	12
Dues structure		6.8%	27
Adult study and programming		8.8%	35
Community outreach/Social Action opportunities		7.5%	30
Family feeling, intimacy		17.0%	68
Distinguished history and tradition		24.1%	96
Reform affiliation with URJ (formerly UAHC)		12.5%	50

This question in the 2008 and 2003 survey do not line up exactly. The portions of the question in 2008 that align with an answer in the 2003 survey are included in the next chart in the last line (no shading). It is not clear that we can draw any conclusions over time because the question and the options for answers are quite different.

2003					
What are our congregation's strengths? (Check no more than three)					
Talented committed professional staff working with devoted congregants	Religious school and Family Center programs for children	Distinguished history and tradition including a long legacy of scholarship and innovation in Jewish thought	Excellent resources and facilities	Other (please specify)	
69	85	111	119	16	
44.23%	54.49%	71.15%	76.28%	10.26%	
	30.3%	24.1%	8%		2008

3. Check the three or four most important reasons why you <u>remain</u> a member of Rodef Shalom. (*You may choose a maximum of 4).				
			Response Percent	Response Count
Religious practices	#3 reason		39.5%	155
Interfaith acceptance			12.5%	49
Child's education			16.3%	64
Life cycle event (Bris, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Marriage, etc.)			18.6%	73
Meet other Jewish people			14.0%	55
Have a place for the High Holy Days	#1 reason		51.5%	202
Building facilities and resources			11.0%	43
Professional staff			6.1%	24
Multi-generational member	#4 reason		26.0%	102
The Rabbi(s)	#2 reason		46.9%	184
The times and location of the school			2.6%	10
Dues structure			5.4%	21
Adult study and programming			9.9%	39
Community outreach/Social Action opportunities			7.4%	29
Family feeling, intimacy			23.0%	90

3. Check the three or four most important reasons why you <u>remain</u> a member of Rodef Shalom. (*You may choose a maximum of 4).			
Distinguished history and tradition		21.2%	83
Reform affiliation with URJ (formerly UAHC)		10.7%	42
Other (please specify) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spouse's family affiliation (5) • Cemetery (2) • To support a Temple in our community (2) • Belonging to Rodef Shalom is a long-standing tradition.(2) • The friends we have made (2) 			

What conclusions might one draw from Questions 2 and 3? If you include the answers to the comments after each of these questions and the comments submitted in Question 27 “*Would you recommend that a friend or family member join Rodef Shalom*”, and Question 29, “*one thing you would not change at Temple*”, you will find supporting evidence that **members of Rodef Shalom are members and stay members because of their faith, their family and friends. The Rabbis, now and in the past, have been a significant influence in their membership decisions. The Reform nature of the religious services and the educational opportunities also play a significant role.**

4. Rodef Shalom has:						
	Agree	Some what Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	N/A	Response Count
Helped me to learn about Jewish life and/or culture	52.6% (189)	26.7% (96)	5.0% (18)	3.1% (11)	12.5% (45)	359
Enabled me to develop friendships with fellow congregants	45.7% (165)	30.2% (109)	6.6% (24)	6.4% (23)	11.1% (40)	361
Been a positive influence on my child's Jewish identity	42.4% (150)	22.6% (80)	5.9% (21)	4.0% (14)	25.1% (89)	354

4. Rodef Shalom has:						
Been a source of support in time of need	39.1% (140)	27.1% (97)	6.1% (22)	5.0% (18)	22.6% (81)	358
Enabled me to pursue opportunities for Social Action	27.3% (91)	32.1% (107)	7.5% (25)	4.8% (16)	28.2% (94)	333
Been influential in my spiritual and religious development	40.5% (143)	29.2% (103)	7.6% (27)	7.1% (25)	15.6% (55)	353
<i>For comments to this question, please see the Appendix.</i>						394
<i>answered question</i>						

Congregants of Rodef Shalom want relationships, learning, a feeling of belonging and a connection to their religion. For over half of the respondents to the question of why do they remain a member, Rodef Shalom is meeting their needs in each of the areas highlighted. 59.4% of the respondents Agree or Somewhat Agree that *Rodef Shalom has enabled them to pursue opportunities for Social Action*. This was the lowest scoring statement, and still almost 60% of the respondents responded positively to the statement. The highest scored statement above: *Rodef Shalom has helped me to learn about Jewish life and/or culture*, received a positive score from 79.3% of the respondents.

5. The Temple's current programs & activities have been (more than adequate, adequate or less than adequate) in:				
	More Than Adequate	Adequate	Less Than Adequate	Response Count
Assisting me to learn about Jewish life and/or culture	39.7% (122)	53.1% (163)	7.2% (22)	307
making friendships with fellow congregants	34.3% (103)	51.7% (155)	14.0% (42)	300
Being a positive influence on my children's Jewish identity	43.1% (109)	40.3% (102)	16.6% (42)	253
Helping in time of need	43.3% (119)	43.6% (120)	13.1% (36)	275

5. The Temple's current programs & activities have been (more than adequate, adequate or less than adequate) in:				
Allowing me to participate in Social Action	35.9% (93)	57.9% (150)	6.2% (16)	259
Aiding my spiritual and religious development	38.7% (113)	50.3% (147)	11.0% (32)	292
<i>answered question</i>				351

Questions 4 and 5 from the 2008 survey demonstrate that **92% of the respondents agree that Temple's current programs and activities are adequate or more than adequate**. In addition the respondents believe that it has been an enabling environment providing support when needed, been a positive influence in their child's Jewish identity and has been influential in their development spiritually and culturally.

However, what these results also point out is that there is a **combined total of 8% of the respondents who do not feel the same way** – they disagree with the statements that Rodef Shalom has programs and activities that adequately meet their needs. In their view, Temple has not been the influence and source of support they were hoping for. 5% disagree with Question #4 and 11.2% disagree with Question #5.

Respondents to Question 5 provided a myriad of suggestions for programs that would meet their current unmet needs. We still need to determine which of these suggestions has the largest audience and when and how the need might be met. Time of day and day of week seemed to be a disappointing factor for those stating a reason they don't currently participate in classes, committees, etc.

2003	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Very Much	Great Extent
Do you feel comfortable and at home at Rodef Shalom?	1.9%	8.5%	34.2%	32.2%	23%
Do you feel part of the community formed by this congregation?	5%	19.7%	32.2%	26.3%	17.1%
To what extent has Temple connected you with a Jewish life?	4%	15.1%	30.9%	34.8%	15.1%

The next questions (12 through 15) were to be answered by respondents who are members of an interfaith household. The responses below indicate an atmosphere where **the non-Jewish spouse feels comfortable and attends Temple functions most of the time – a significant accomplishment and one of several ways that respondents highlighted Rodef Shalom's**

acceptance of diversity. As with many areas of life, almost as many respondents indicated that their non-Jewish spouse felt somewhat comfortable (42.3%) as compared with those who felt comfortable (49.3%).

12. Does the non-Jewish spouse attend Temple functions?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Frequently		34.2%	25
Sometimes		38.4%	28
Rarely		17.8%	13
Never		9.6%	7
<i>answered question</i>			73

13. Does the non-Jewish spouse feel comfortable attending Temple functions?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		49.3%	35
Somewhat		42.3%	30
No		8.5%	6
<i>answered question</i>			71

14. What other faith is observed in your home?			
Christian = 11	Catholic = 8	Presbyterian = 3	Lutheran = 1
Episcopalian = 1	Unitarian = 1	Baptist = 1	None = 35
<i>answered question</i>			72

15. In what faith(s) are you raising your child(ren)?	
Jewish = 64	
Lutheran = 1	
<i>answered question</i>	
	81

- In the 2003 survey, 85 of the 156 respondents to this question stated that their family was an interfaith family. In 2008, 73 respondents of the total 414 indicated they were a member of an interfaith family.
- In the 2003 survey, 45 of the 156 respondents indicated that someone in their family had converted to Judaism.

Questions 16 and 17 were to be answered by respondents that had a “special need” or that had a family member with a special need that limits his/her ability to participate in activities at Rodef Shalom:

16. Do you or does any member of your family have a "special need" that limits your/his/her ability to participate in activities at Rodef Shalom? If so, please identify that special need or disability

Autism/ learning disabilities = 6

- General health
- I have been failing health-wise and developed dementia. Going to temple is no longer feasible. However, I appreciate the calls and visits of the rabbi.
- My schedule does limit me to activities. Also the distance. I do not live in the area. I do work some evenings and Saturdays.
- My wife has Alzheimer's
- Blind and hard of hearing. Temple is very accommodating to her needs.
- Elderly. Transportation is sometimes a problem.
- Post polio and multiple sclerosis.
- Do not drive.
- Need better hearing devices for senior citizens.
- Limited walking. Use cane or wheel chair.
- Hearing dynamic. Unable to hear except in sanctuary & Levy hall (assistive hearing devices)
- I would love to see opportunities for adults with mild-moderate disabilities to socialize & meet each other.
- Illness for past 4 years.
- My husband has been ill for the past 4 years.
- Back & hip problems.
- Should have asked when my mother was still living!!! About 5 years ago.
- Distance to temple
- I am on assisted living. Two members do help me.
- Do to declining health; my mother can no longer attend.
- Yes, but we handle it well
- My wife is severely-impaired with dementia.
- Simply distance from our house and little time during the week.
- My granddaughter is wheelchair dependent; it is very difficult to find a babysitter so that my daughter could attend Temple functions.
- He doesn't feel socially adequate
- care giving needs
- Severe anxiety, making religious school too stressful.
- distance to travel
- Visual impairment

answered question

84

17. What suggestion(s) do you have for ways we can help improve your/his/her participation in Temple activities?

- Alzheimer's support groups
- Vouchers for services are great!!! Can not be used for temple activities
- Informal acoustic in main sanctuary
- Extend learning opportunities in other parts of the Synagogue
- Better classes on advanced Jewish Learning
- Visit me
- an alternative for children for Saturday morning services
- One of the rabbis could make an occasional visit to my wife and other impaired congregants in the South Hills.
- Parent's group for special needs kids
- Invite him to work as a volunteer job
- have someone personally invite us to something
- I like helping in committees and meeting Jewish people
- adequately met at this time
- Have him on the Bima during services- get him involved!
- more connections from the Rabbis to the students
- We are grateful that the temple has been very accommodating through private tutoring towards her Bat Mitzvah - I don't think that there is any room for improvement
- individualized inclusion
- place sermons online via streaming audio
- not interested in becoming more involved
- none - I like being an inactive member at this time
- Repair the curb along the driveway; make sure large print prayer books are readily available; use contrasts, not muted colors when designing web page; paint yellow lines on edges of stairways, steps and curbs; remind people to ask if a blind person wants to take their arm and not to take a blind person's arm in order to help them;

answered question

55

Comments to Question 16 and 17 highlight the need for additional thought and focus on 'age related' special needs – ease of getting to Temple, hearing, sight, and potential isolation. Considering the advancing age of the members, this should be an area for additional study and multiple solutions

18. Do you celebrate Shabbat as a special day or in any special way in your home?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	25.6%	98
No	40.5%	155
Sometimes	33.9%	130

18. Do you celebrate Shabbat as a special day or in any special way in your home?

If yes, How?

Light Candles = 65

Shabbat Dinner = 35

Say Prayers/blessings = 24

Serve challah = 20

Attend Friday Services = 18

Wine = 13

Limit/no work, routine activities, shopping, computer = 7

Say Kiddish, Kaddish = 5

Havdalah = 3

Schul = 2

- Brahot
- Light candles; invite guests for traditional Shabbat dinner, attend Saturday services; take a Shabbat nap or otherwise rest; avoid shopping and other mundane activities
- My daughter and I cook together to prepare challah and matzah balls. We have incorporated giving tzedakah as we share the ways in which we are thankful for the things that have occurred over the last week.
- All of the Friday night rituals (stop short of hand washing and the more observant traditions) and I almost never work on Shabbat beginning at 5 pm or so on Friday.
- *In the 2003 survey, 58 of the 155 respondents (37%) indicated they light candles on Friday night; in the 2008 survey 65 of the 383 comments (17%) indicated they light candles on Friday night.*

answered question **383**

19. Do you celebrate Passover in your home?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	89.1%	351
No	10.9%	43
<i>answered question</i>		394

20. Do you celebrate Chanukah in your home?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	89.3%	351
No	10.7%	42
<i>answered question</i>		393

21. Do you keep kosher in your home?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
	Yes	2.8%	11
	No	88.1%	347
	Somewhat	9.1%	36
<i>answered question</i>			394

22. Do you celebrate Christmas in your home?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
	Yes	14.3%	56
	No	85.7%	336
<i>answered question</i>			392

23. How would you rate your ability to read Hebrew at services?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
	Not at all	35.7%	140
	With transliteration	21.9%	86
	Slowly	30.6%	120
	Fluently	11.7%	46
<i>answered question</i>			392

24. In what tradition were you raised?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Reform Judaism	50.5%	199
Conservative Judaism	22.1%	87
Orthodox Judaism	7.9%	31
Reconstructionist Judaism	0.3%	1
"Ethnically" Jewish Only	7.4%	29
Catholic	3.6%	14
Protestant	4.6%	18
Other (please specify)	3.8%	15
	<i>answered question</i>	394

25. As a child, how important was your religious practice?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Very Important	21.1%	83
Important	42.6%	168
Not Very Important	36.3%	143
	<i>answered question</i>	394

26. How important is Rodef Shalom in your life?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Very Important	25.1%	99
Important	51.0%	201
Not Very Important	23.9%	94

27. Would you recommend that a friend or family member join Rodef Shalom?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
	Yes	77.0%	305
	Maybe	20.7%	82
	No	2.3%	9
<p>Although over 3/4s of the respondents said Yes (77%), a review of their comments provides another option: a Yes, with an "it depends" included. Those who expressed some hesitation focused their comments on a needs based approach to recommending Rodef Shalom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o education for their children o a location near by their home o age and interests o financial situation/value for the dues structure 			
<i>answered question</i>			396

28. If there were one thing you would change at Temple, what would it be?	
<p>More English/Less Hebrew = 11 Cantor (reform, male) = 4 Start Friday Services later = 4 Acoustics are poor = 3 Change time of committee meetings (sisterhood) to enable working people to participate = 2 Use the Union Prayer Book = 3 <i>For the remainder of the comments, see the Appendix.</i></p>	
<i>answered question</i>	
217	

29. If there were one thing you <u>would not change</u> at Temple, what would it be?	
<p>Rabbis = 52 (so right for this time in our history; maintain respected tradition,) Building, architecture, sanctuary, gardens, facilities = 19 (Amazing, beautiful, quality, peaceful, spiritual) Staff = 12 (specifically named = 2) Very kind, caring, friendly, welcoming, helpful Programs = 8 (amazing, wide variety) Family Center = 6 Gift Shop & Library = 4 Commitment to Social Action and Community Outreach = 7 Inclusive & Informal atmosphere = 2 <i>For the remainder of the comments, please see the Appendix.</i></p>	
<i>answered question</i>	
196	

32. Do you have internet access and have you visited the Temple's website to get information?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
No internet access	12.4%	48
Have internet access, never visited website	40.7%	157
Have visited website at least once	36.3%	140
Regularly visit the website	10.6%	41
	<i>answered question</i>	386



RODEF SHALOM
CONGREGATION

Congregational Survey 5768

Appendix

2. Check the three or four most important reasons why you joined Rodef Shalom. (* You may choose a maximum of 4).

Other (please specify)

- Fits my lifestyle
- I never joined; my wife is a member; I can't seem to get off your lists
- My wife's insistence
- Commitment to Jewish community
- Practically all of this list is appropriate. We were gone from the area for 11 months, and returned to Rodef. We enjoy the acceptance of our alternative family, the joint membership with Bet Tikvah, and Rodef. Additionally, our children benefit from the resources and support that are afforded through Rodef.
- I joined when I was involved in the conversion process-- I initially had planned to join the Reconstructionist congregation in PGH, but when I found they could not help me with conversion, I got a 'tip' from a friend who is a member of Rodef Shalom to talk to one of the rabbis here. I did, it was terrific, I attended one service (then called the 'alternative service'...) and immediately we joined. Interestingly, I initially liked the idea of Rodef because I thought it was BIG enough not to NEED me to be very 'involved'-- although I'm a 'people person', I felt that I had quite enough 'people' in my life, and I was NOT looking for more friends (I rarely had time for all my friendships at the time :-). But that all changed once I joined and got involved... I'm now 'hyper-involved' at Rodef :-).
- Rodef reminds me very much of the synagogue I grew up with in NYC
- I'm only involved in the preschool.
- The sense of connection over generations of family and friends. Long history of belonging to the temple in our family since before 1926. The temple was there when our family became fatherless and provided needed support.
- I appreciate the Family Hebrew classes that are offered. I feel that my child is getting more out of the 45 min class than he ever did from 2 hrs of Tuesday Hebrew. I have talked with several congregants who have experienced both sides and they seem to agree. Maybe it's time to reevaluate the structure of the Tuesday classes.
- My father was a very devoted member of Rodef Shalom. He's been dead for 27 years. When I'm at Temple I sense his presence.
- Rodef Shalom used to have a very modern service. It is getting away from that. The services on Sabbath now last about 2 hours - about the same as a Conservative service - I don't think that is a good direction.
- We also were excited about the Youth Group and all that it had to offer.
- I love teaching at Rodef and wanted to support the organization
- Family connection most important since because I was alone; my mother and sister had recently died.

2. Check the three or four most important reasons why you joined Rodef Shalom. (* You may choose a maximum of 4).

- I have been a member of Temple Emanuel for 25 years and recently joined Rodef because I am more comfortable with the style of the services as Emanuel has become too conservative for me.
- Embracing Diversity
- Generalized sense of connection with a Jewish identity
- Force of habit! Have been affiliated for more than 40 years and continue to support financially for benefit of others less able to support financially.
- The desire to increase my spirituality.
- German Jewish heritage. My family is from Germany.

answered question

399

3. Check the three or four most important reasons why you remain a member of Rodef Shalom. (*You may choose a maximum of 4).

Other (please specify)

- Sense of responsibility to institution that was there for us
- Want to continue my membership as long as I live
- To keep alive for next generation. To run music from Rodef Shalom
- Sense of belonging
- volunteering
- To be supportive
- In hope that it will once again be the Reform Temple I knew
- Have found a very comfortable niche
- Commitment to Jewish community
- for a reform congregation
- unhappy how conservative temple and services have become
- Friday evening service
- Might consider an alternative
- The adult study I'm talking about is the Torah study on Saturday mornings
- We believe in synagogue affiliation, and as a Reform Jew in the city, RSC remain the best choice.
- Because I love the Levy Hall Minyan service :-)
- RS's acceptance of not only those of other faiths, but also other lifestyles. It's general welcoming attitude toward all.
- Feel as a Jew we need to provide on going places that promote Judaism. Temple does nothing for me but feel a sense that as a Jew I should belong to a Temple.
- Temple helped me with my tuition when I was a medical student and did it in a very dignified and private way.
- The continuing warmth of those mentioned above.
- I love teaching at Rodef and wanted to support the organization
- Would appreciate a greater feeling of family than I have had since I joined.
- This one's hard because there are more than 4 reasons that I stay. I could check all of them!
- The attachment of our son to religious school and my attachment to Sisterhood
- I have taken a leadership role, I want to be affiliated with a reform congregation, Rodef is the most convenient location

3. Check the three or four most important reasons why you remain a member of Rodef Shalom. (*You may choose a maximum of 4).

- Ability to share holiday worship with friends.
- We've been members for more than 40 years. The place feels sort of like a comfortable old shoe.

answered question

392

28. If there were one thing you would change at Temple, what would it be?

- Improve religious education. Decrease dues & cost for events
- Programming - more topical or convenient times with more well known speakers
- Bingo.
- Evening social get-togethers (preferably an informal agenda)
- Invite young people to participate in ways unrelated to "money". Networking for young adults – Mentoring
- Continue to improve the various services and lectures available
- Bring in dynamic speakers to speak on all subjects
- Sanctuary seats are difficult to rise and sit in during services
- More activities for older singles
- I disagree with the amount of Hebrew in the services.
- We live so far from Temple it is difficult to attend regularly
- Although both my son and I attend Rodef Religious school, neither of us knows Hebrew
- Rabbis marrying inter-faith couples
- Review list of members that have left RS and are still alive. Find reason why they left. Perhaps bring them back or correct reason they left.
- Adopt procedures that would ease the financial burden on young families who struggle to pay additional fees for religious school and bar/bat Mitzvah
- I would like to see some return to "old-style" Reform Judaism with reduction in the pace toward Conservative Judaism. But then again my husband and I are 88 years of age.
- The clash between the older members, secured in and deeply committed about their austere Reform Judaism and the younger members who want things warm & fuzzy.
- I think Temple is run pretty well. After Dr. Freehof and Walter Jacob - I miss his sermons
- Skip the rented choir
- Building participation in daily services with a Rabbinical leader
- An attempt to try to integrate people without faith who like the rituals and the learning possibilities
- Dues structure
- More activities for members older than 45 as the activities I have been to the members were much older, not my age group
- More tradition
- The music on Friday night. Too Hasidic
- Vending machines for drinks & food. Parking stickers for cars in event that car is left in lot overnight or long period of time.
- It would be nice if everyone wore Yarmulkes. More events or maybe service in the glass ceiling room @ Rodef. More social activities for young couples < 35
- More informal music from pulpit
- Member participation in the service. E.g.: reading Torah, service, etc

28. If there were one thing you would change at Temple, what would it be?

- I wish we could attract more members, especially younger members.
- The carpeting in Freehof Hall
- Less like a "club" and more faith based
- Trying to become MORE on the Orthodox model
- The services in Levy Hall. This space doesn't have much spirituality for me. While I haven't seen the new prayer book, I'd like to use Union Prayer book more often
- No gay marriages. Remain Reform - do not sink back into orthodoxy
- Exorbitant dues
- Two things, both regarding the services: 1. older people know by heart in English. 2. Return to old, familiar music - I like tradition, not change.
- I would like to have one bulletin instead of three separate mailings every month
- Have more pot luck dinners after services.
- For members who have paid dues and other fees for over half a century, they should not be required to pay increased dues in their golden years.
- Encourage members to be more outgoing with other members
- The high cost of dues.
- Quit changing the melody for songs.
- Run it more efficiently. Dues keep going up and up and every other year it seems you are doing fund raising! Run it like a business. Trim the fat in order that there is a future.
- At congregational dinners - Kosher meat/poultry & not mix meat & milk (not advocating dish & pan kosher)
- Eliminate one rabbinical position
- Not being ignored by young rabbis. They are almost unfriendly.
- Also sermons
- The way the board of trustees is chosen
- Stronger leadership
- The public address system. Get a better microphone for the main sanctuary! The bar Mitzvah child is barely heard during the ceremony. Very Important!
- Rabbis that talk to the congregation do not always read the sermon! There are still complaints as to the sound system!
- I would find services more comfortable and meaningful if they resembled those that I had known growing up.
- Return to the Reformed practices of Rabbi Freehof
- Eliminate the haughty attitude that caused the huge monstrosity to be built in the parking lot and emulate a Ritz-Carlton lobby.
- Make it orthodox. Either be religious or not. Why have a Jewish congregation if it does not keep all of God's commandments? If they are not God's commandments, then become a secular humanistic congregation - all or nothing, not some wimpy reform mish mash.
- More opportunity for the hearing impaired to participate beyond the main sanctuary & Levy Hall
- Make religious practices more liberal - adopt newly published English/Hebrew prayer book (on facing pages)
- Stop the pursuit of making Temple more religious. If I wanted to be more religious I would join a conservative congregation.
- I went to Sabbath school at RS - I never learned enough Hebrew to understand the increased usage of Hebrew in the service.
- No Talis or Yarmulke for Rabbis. no Cantor
- Better leadership. The leadership at Temple does not have a presence in the Pittsburgh community and is not looked up to by the community
- A drift away from "classical" reform Jewish practices

28. If there were one thing you would change at Temple, what would it be?

- Better classes
- I prefer the family service at the High Holy Days. I'm not used to the "Christian" style traditional service.
- Services with more meaning. High Holiday VERY disappointing. No content - I could follow
- More Hebrew, less organ & choir (magically transform the stained glass windows to less Christian-like composition & poses. Of course, this is impossible, or would take a "miracle")
- Please ask the assistant rabbi to speak more slowly and distinctly
- It is very hard for working families to pay dues & religious school fees. Any help there?
- have a RABBI led, more heavily promoted daily prayer service
- The Hebrew and conservative service – everything
- Interaction with rabbis, especially at service. Seems that services are more "formal" than at other synagogue services I've attended in other cities.
- The board is very biased about what they print in the Hakesher. Recently I asked to print a Mazel Tov to us. That was seen as an advertisement for our program but they have done so many others who wrote articles, books, and for their children and grandchildren who achieved honors.
- Reduce the trend toward Conservative and Orthodox practices
- No announcements at Temple services. Kabbalat Shabbat on Friday nights at 5:30 (30 - 35 minutes). Some lay leadership changes/fresh board
- Schnorring during High Holiday services. Feels like church
- Shorten Services, Shorter Sermons
- follow the classical reform more
- More adult education - in depth
- Less cliques, more opportunities for family opportunities where the kids don't just run around. More direct contact with Rabbis.
- More friendship with the disabled
- more basic instruction for converts
- Less social action
- More consistent use of the adult volunteer choir, perhaps once a month
- More Hebrew, less English at HHD. Replace Machzor.
- I would use the old union prayer book always
- Less meetings for my wife to go to
- I'm convinced this congregation will NEVER change.
- Replace Rabbi (3)
- I wouldn't change anything at Temple other than occasionally returning to the High Holy Day music that I grew up with in the sixties. For my family, our degree of participation is a function of lack of time, not lack of things available to do at Temple.
- Adopt Chicago Sinai Union Prayer books as primary prayer books
- Stop the trend towards conservatism
- more events for the 'middle age' group and sisterhood in the evenings
- more socializing
- to make the dues structure more affordable for young singles and couples
- Congregational music participation on the high holy days
- The slavish devotion to Hebrew or the transliterations. Neither conveys the sense of spirituality or reverence for life that is part of the prayers in English, e.g. the kaddish.
- Have the Rabbis be more active in non temple activities
- More spirituality, more in-depth Jewish learning

28. If there were one thing you would change at Temple, what would it be?

- NOT have Levy Hall Minyan on same weekend as the Dor v'Dor service-- I think these are potentially many of the same hoped for congregants, but you'll NEVER (or rarely!) get people actually coming to both services, Friday night AND Saturday morning.... but they might indeed come to both IF they were on different weekends... I'd see about improving the acoustics (if it's at all possible!!!) in the main sanctuary-- many older congregants simply can't hear in there, even though they LOVE to be in the sanctuary...
- More evening classes of interest to busy people like me
- More youth programming
- To make the dues structure more realistic for single working people without children
- Better congregant outreach
- Teen School Dates and Times
- Services more traditional and less formal
- Cost less
- Try to get more families to be a part of the Congregation
- Dues structure
- I would enlarge the family Hebrew program and encourage all parents who do not know Hebrew to take this class with their kids. My son started out in Tuesday Hebrew but was learning nothing. We switched to family Hebrew and it has benefited all of us. The problem is that when my 7 year old is ready to be officially enrolled in Hebrew class next year, the kids have to go to separate Hebrew classes and this scheme does not always work out for families. There needs to be some reform here and a way to integrate the levels because it is family Hebrew, after all.
- Greater intellectualism and spiritualism in rabbinic sermons.
- Return to the beautiful music used by Rabbi Freehof
- Levy Hall Minyan every week and through the summer
- The financial situation
- Friendlier congregation
- Knowing the Rabbis better
- Put in a more traditional service
- More knowledgeable administrative leadership -- nonprofit management has become much more sophisticated and we need to keep up
- Enhance the educational offerings. We love xxxxx, but he needn't have a monopoly on learning for the non-Orthodox community.
- The music at the Friday 5:30 service has become too ethnic
- More emphasis on attracting new members
- Making Temple governance more bottom-up than top-down
- Casual atmosphere
- Having a ramp to get to the Bima.
- The dues structure
- Intergenerational services, study
- Have the programming for children begin earlier in the evenings
- Ever bolder/more integration of teaching & community building discussions into services & other events
- The dues structure It's very unfair, and discourages membership We must get a handle on what the community of congregations is charging so that we all understand the situation better.
- The High Holy Day services which we attend (main sanctuary) seem very formal. I would prefer a more participatory (particularly being able to sing along) service.
- Classes related to advance Jewish learning
- I'm a "lifer" and miss the old prayer book and "true" reform service

28. If there were one thing you would change at Temple, what would it be?

- Congregational participation in liturgical music - I don't like being "sung-to"
- Chapel services: physically uncomfortable
- The snobbery
- Number of young congregants
- It's easy to meet people but not get to know them well.
- Going back to the old familiar tunes!!!
- A better front door for handicap members
- Have more get togethers where everyone is welcome
- I would not allow people to wear kippas or talis during services.
- Because of my work schedule, maybe Teen School is better on a Sunday morning
- More day time things to do; be caring about sick congregants and let them know that they are in your thoughts and prayers (besides Meisabera!)
- The focus on casual attire, a tremendous turn-off to us traditionalists
- Have Rabbis be more personable with members & kids, especially kids
- Guidelines for children's behavior in the common areas.
- Friendlier, more welcoming to current and potential members
- The coffee
- For event planning, there is a little too much "no!" when there could be some more "let's see how we can accommodate you."
- The constant change in tunes is overwhelming
- Different kinds of opportunities for community building among Religious School families
- More young families
- No sisterhood/brotherhood... just committees that anyone can be involved with
- We still need to become a lot more warm and welcoming, especially on Saturday mornings
- Friendlier, more upbeat services
- More adult b'nai mitzvot classes; more satellite children's classes for suburban members
- Adjust the staff to the current realities.
- Better education-update-for the religious school
- Management, rabbinic leadership and involvement
- Dues structure
- Know more about what the board was doing
- Leadership
- The assumption that all Reformed Jews lean towards a liberal agenda
- Change the early and late services on High Holidays to 1
- More social events
- More L'Dor V'Dor
- The music at services changes so much I don't know the tunes and feel uncomfortable at services.
- Friday night services to feel just a bit more child-friendly
- More activities for young adults with no families.
- More time devoted by rabbinical staff to visitations at Nursing homes
- Staff head of membership
- Levy Hall service EVERY Sat. morning, new music
- Emptiness of building at times
- Become reformed as I knew it growing up in the 50's and 60's
- Frequent new melodies for prayers can be jarring

28. If there were one thing you would change at Temple, what would it be?

- Add more parking
- The formality of the "big" services
- Be more "young professional friendly" i.e.: more regular Levy Hall Minyans, more educational and social programs during the evenings and weekends.
- Quit planning and start doing.
- I'm not sure
- Attract younger people 35-55
- Eliminate "No" when discussing changes or new ideas
- More opportunities to meet other adult members of similar age
- Increase membership
- Outside perception
- Where it's located
- More traditional services with more up-to-date music
- Teen program and the Bat /Bar Mitzvah experience in relationship with the staff has been null
- More coordination of rabbinic and other staffing
- Board, rabbinic, and administrative glitches
- Make it more clear to all members that a small number give way beyond the dues level while many do not pay full dues when they can afford to do better. Our magnificent facility can and should handle a larger membership, which cannot and should not be supported by so few. Too many people take for granted the high quality offerings and survival of Temple and feel an entitlement to use it without contributing financially to it.
- We are very happy with the services & programs that we are able to attend.
- Contact members who are in an interfaith family make it interesting enough for them to come to meet other mixed marriages

answered question

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29. If there were one thing you would not change at Temple, what would it be?

- keep services in the sanctuary
- the changes to improve services
- The ease with which we can get tickets for high holy days, the supportive/warm atmosphere
- The "formal" services in the sanctuary
- The shortness of the Friday night services.
- Reform Judaism practice
- The formal services in the main sanctuary
- The variety of Sabbath services and their musical content
- The Sabbath & holiday services
- Erev Shabbat services at 5:30 p.m. (2)
- Friday night services
- less reformed
- percentage mix of English and Hebrew in services
- Levi Hall Services
- Length of Friday night services
- Tot Shabbat

29. If there were one thing you would not change at Temple, what would it be?

- Don't eliminate choir for Sabbath Service
- PLEASE remain a classically reformed temple
- The various alternative services
- Format of religious services
- Trend toward more traditional service.
- Worship services and worship traditions
- Informal worship services, e.g., Levy Hall
- Keep the Levy Hall Minyan to a regular schedule-- AND aim to continue it AT LEAST once a month in the SUMMER.... so as not to lose momentum
- Remain a leader in the reform movement
- Stay as reform as possible, NOT become more orthodox
- practice of reform Judaism
- The effort to evolve and become more relevant.
- Beauty of the temple. It is a magnificent landmark of which we are proud
- Continue positive attitude and acceptance of inter-faith families.
- Its teachings
- The free, fully-funded music programs
- The friends that I have made
- Handicapped accessible
- Interesting speakers - carrying Torah through temple service
- Friendliness of fellow congregants (3)
- That Temple is always open to anyone, even non-Jews
- The commitment by the senior members to the institution
- Its respect for individual's privacy
- The "down to earth" feeling you get from everyone
- My husband and I have received many honors over the 50 years we have belonged not only for our program but also in our professional life. It was such a small thing that I asked and a cold response was what I got. I'm very disappointed
- Men and Women seated together and women being treated equally
- It's willingness to change with the times
- Youth Group has been wonderful for my child.
- The Religious school
- Concern for Interfaith families
- volunteerism
- The traditions of the Temple are wonderful. I wish this was reflected more at the High Holiday services.
- I like having the 3 Rabbis and it is very important to me that you have a female Rabbi. She is a role model for all the girls and women of the congregation.
- the feeling of really belonging
- The character of its community
- Openness to welcoming individuals and families to become part of the Jewish family
- This is a little hard to explain without sounding demeaning, but I would never want a showman type rabbinate as exists at Temple Sinai. I think {name} is a wonderful person, but his style, and I have seen it elsewhere, leaves me as cold as attending an Orthodox service. I believe that even as the nature of our services and our relationship with our rabbis evolve, as they must, we should retain the mutually respectful relationship between the rabbi and the congregation.

29. If there were one thing you would not change at Temple, what would it be?

- The friends that my family and I have made through the Family Center, its staff and programs.
- education
- I love the underlying spirit of warmth and love of the Congregation at Rodef; I think we need to build on it aggressively and explicitly.
- Men's discussion group (Thursdays 10:30)
- special needs, and learn about Jewishness
- The willingness to try to change with the times, however successful.
- Warmth & welcoming (2)
- emphasis on adult education
- It's emphasis on children and education (2)
- religious school structure
- The people (2)
- Desire to embrace change
- prayer books

answered question

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