

Jewish Delegate Assembly of Greater Pittsburgh Statement on the Importance of Intra-Jewish Communal Unity and Peoplehood

Cosponsors: Beth El Congregation, Congregation Beth Shalom, Jewish Community Center, New Light Congregation, Rodef Shalom, Shaare Torah Congregation, Temple Emanuel of the South Hills, Temple Sinai

הִנֵּה מֵה טוֹב וּמֵה נְעִים נְשַׁבֵּת אַחִים גַּם יַחַד

Heenay ma tov u'ma naim shevet achim gam yachad

"How good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" –Psalms 133

Background

The Pittsburgh Jewish community has a high level of engagement, collaboration, and attentiveness to civility. However on a national scale, civil discourse between liberals and conservatives, Democrats and Republicans, Likud and Labor, and secular and religious is growing more difficult to come by.

In 2017, discourse has become increasingly strained on a local, national, and international level around issues including but not limited to egalitarian prayer at the Kotel; which rabbis the Israeli government deems acceptable to authorize conversions; whether or not stores and cinemas should be open in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem on Shabbat; and the drafting of yeshiva students into the army.

The Jewish Delegates Assembly:

- Supports efforts to develop pragmatic and consensus-based solutions to religious and personal status issues in Israel, as well as recommends local programming to educate the Pittsburgh Jewish community about this issue;
- Supports existing initiatives and encourages intra-Jewish initiatives in Pittsburgh that foster peoplehood, unity, cohesiveness, mutual respect and tolerance among diverse segments of the Jewish community.
- Supports existing and continued programming which strengthens the bonds between Israeli and American Jews and among all branches of Judaism.
- Urges the full spectrum of religious institutions in Israel and the U.S. to consistently condemn intra-Jewish hate speech and rhetoric and to internalize that practice and ideal.
- Continues to support and engage with the State of Israel and its people.

The Community Relations Council should:

- Support existing and create additional intra-Jewish initiatives and/or educational programs in Pittsburgh that foster Jewish peoplehood and communal unity.
- Continue to monitor public affairs issues in Israel that have implications for American Jewry as well as the relationship between the Israeli Jewish community and the Diaspora.
- Identify formal and informal existing initiatives and explore additional joint initiatives that strengthen the bonds between the American Jewish community and Israeli Jewish community, including but not limited to opportunities made available through Federation's partnership with Karmiel and Misgav.
- Continue to represent the interests of all denominations of Judaism.

- Keep the Greater Pittsburgh Jewish community informed of diverse perspectives on issues that impact the Jewish world using a wide array of resources, including but not limited to the Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle.