

Dear Members, Jews, and Friends:

On August 13th 2005, the task force for “The Role of Non-Jews” met at Congregation Har Shalom with the goals as stated in the minutes of that day. The task of coming up with a draft document that is acceptable to all those represented is undertaken here. The task of deciding who is or is not a Jew is not addressed by this document in deference to whoever has power in that regard. The sole intention here is to provide a reasonable COMPROMISE and define “The Line” beyond which no non-Jew is expected to wander in Congregation Har Shalom. The spirit of this document, which is to be inclusive without abdicating our collective sense of Judaism will hopefully shine through, presenting both boundaries and opportunities for participation in our holy community:

Jobs: The following list of jobs must always be held / lead by Jews:

- The CEO or President of the Board of the congregation and all Board members
- The head / Educational leader of the religious school.
- The leader of our services.
- The Chairman or leader of the Ritual Committee

Tallit / Kipah:

- It is acceptable for anyone to wear a Kipah as a sign of respect.
- The Tallit is a prayer shawl to remind us of observing the mitzvot; it is inappropriate for a non-Jew to wear one.

Judaism 180:

- Non-Jews may attend these classes if they are considering conversion or are seeking to learn more about a Jewish spiritual journey.

Cemetery:

- Non-Jewish spouses and children of Jewish members may be buried in the cemetery as long as there are no symbols of other religions on the tombstone. Burial services must be Jewish or non-denominational in character.

Approaching the Torah / Bimah:

- Non-Jews may approach the Torah / Bimah as a family member during a life-cycle event (for example, B’nai Mitzvah, baby naming, premarital wedding blessing) along with Jewish family member(s). They will remain silent while the Jewish partner recites the blessing(s).
- Non-Jews may approach the Torah / Bimah as members of a “group” (3 or more) of congregants so as not to be excluded from the group. They will remain silent during recitation of the blessings.

Passive Worship activities:

- Non-Jews may touch the Torah with a prayer book as it is carried around before reading, since this is essentially a passive activity.
- Non-Jews may participate with the services by singing, speaking and praying.

Aliyot:

- Only Jews may be given an Aliyah.

Respectfully submitted
Richard Brown
September 14, 2005