

## THE SINAI CONNECTIONS STORY

The vision of what is now Sinai Connections was conceived in 2013 by then Temple President, Rhonda Singer, as a means to strengthen member relationships and allow participants to go beyond superficial interactions at Temple.

In the beginning, a few pilot groups were formed: First Babies, Neighbours Living on the Same Street and Temple Sinai Stitchers. There are now many successful groups advertised in Temple's E-Vents, Ei-ru'im and Social Media.

### SO, WHAT EXACTLY IS SINAI CONNECTIONS?

It's an opportunity to create and participate in groups of common interest with other like-minded Temple members. Most importantly, Sinai Connections start with initiatives from members rather than the clergy or staff.

Our groups are driven by people who want to have fun, make new friends and find a sense of community. Many wonderful stories have been shared by members who have participated in Sinai Connections groups.

Anyone with a passion or an interest can take the lead and initiate a group just by contacting Marcie Goldberg, Temple's Programs and Operations Coordinator. She will connect them with our Sinai Connections Leadership Group to discuss and help establish a new Connections group.

From many years of experience, we have learned that for groups to be successful, they not only need strong leadership, but also need to stress three practices. Each Connections group is based on:

- living by a Brit which is a contract between group members about the purpose of the group and the behaviours they strive for.
- encouraging "Doing Jewish" in some way.
- integrating and discussing open ended questions which provide opportunities to connect over meaningful dialogue about something that everyone can share in common.

### Our groups have no experts, just friends!

The recent pandemic has caused us to reinvent ourselves and launch Sinai Connections 2.0. While we continue to create new groups, many of our existing groups successfully migrated to online formats. These groups have become even more inclusive as we reach out to those confined to their homes and for whom Sinai Connections offers a welcome relief from isolation due to the lockdown.

Sinai Connections strengthen relationships between members and can provide great value to everyone involved.

Thank you to the original creators who began this organic initiative; Rhonda Singer, Marilyn Cukier, Jeff Yolleck and Rabbi Mikelberg.... And the current Leadership Connections: Marilyn Cukier, Phyllis Johnston, Norm Katzman, Johanna Novis, Rhonda Singer, Marci Trachter, Suzanne Witkin and Joanne Wolfson, who keep it ticking!

We've come so far, and the future looks bright!

