

Keruv Outreach Committee Update

This is a brief update of the Keruv Outreach Committee's work. By way of brief background, the Mission of the KOC is the following:

*To create a welcoming and inclusive community of Keruv (drawing in) by reaching out to our intermarried couples and families whose members include those of different religious traditions and foster a richer connection to Jewish life at home and at synagogue.

*To identify opportunities for inclusion within the framework of Torah and the principles of the Conservative Movement, respecting the positions and rituals reserved for Jews.

*To inspire Jewish families and Jewish identities with the intent of reaching future generations and fortifying a commitment to Jewish life and Jewish values - even in families where all the members are not Jewish.

In furtherance of its Mission, the KOC held two "dialogue sessions." The purpose of the dialogue sessions was to inspire dialogue at Har Zion about interfaith welcoming and outreach. In the dialogue sessions, participants were asked to react to and discuss certain "principles" of interfaith outreach as adopted by the Leadership Council of Conservative

Judaism. We used the principles as conversation-starters only. The resulting discussions were energetic, wide-ranging and many of the participants shared poignantly their personal experiences as Conservative Jews whose families are composed of individuals of differing faith traditions. The sessions took place on December 2, 2012 and January 6, 2013. The format for each session was identical. The sessions were well publicized and all interested congregants were invited to attend one of the sessions.

Dialogue session participants were, by a large majority, comfortable with "Keruv" (i.e., reaching out to non-traditional families and attempting to draw them near) as an important emphasis at Har Zion, although there was a minority who questioned the importance of Keruv-type activity. Overall, participants were strongly interested in learning about and considering ways that Har Zion can be more welcoming and flexible in meeting the needs of our non-traditional families.

As promised, the KOC has shared this early feedback with the Rabbi Search Committee.

Respectfully,
Jane Herling,
Chair, Keruv Outreach Committee