



FAQ: Kehillah Kedoshah (Sacred Community)

Q. What is *kehillah kedoshah*?

A. *Kehillah kedoshah* is an exciting initiative that helps MJC become a more engaging congregation. It helps us further link to the richness of our community through our relationships to each other and to the spirit of our Jewish connection. These connections are made through multiple entry points tailored to our varied interests.

Q. How did this initiative start?

A. A number of our congregants expressed a desire for multiple ways to connect to other members and for new opportunities to become involved with MJC. As we began brainstorming, some of our members attended a Gladstein Fellowship conference. This annual conference for a group of rabbis and their congregants focuses on entrepreneurial approaches to synagogue activity and growth. Part of the recent conference was dedicated to creating *kehillah kedoshah*, sacred community, and our attendees were inspired to bring that approach -- and that energy -- to MJC.

Q. Whose concept is it?

A. Ron Wolfson, an important Jewish thinker, introduced the concept in a recent book. As he explains it, a *kehillah kedoshah* is a "sacred community where relationships are paramount, where worship is engaging, where everyone is learning, where repair of the world is a moral imperative, where healing is offered, and where personal and institutional transformation are embraced." Congregations around the country are beginning to implement it.

Q. What makes these affinity groups "sacred?"

A. The groups engage in community building -- an opportunity not only to share activities but to discuss meaningful and relevant issues concerning our spiritual growth and development. Periodically, the rabbi or a member of the *kehillah kedoshah* team joins each group for dialogue that utilizes the strength of the group's bond to delve into important issues, such as Jewish identity and spirituality. Our goal is to connect the sacredness that each group fosters to the larger MJC community, while developing a unique vision as we, together, confront the challenges of American Judaism in the 21st century.

Q. How are groups formed?

A. An individual identifies the groups that are best suited for him or her and lets the MJC office know about that interest. Each group has a leader to help schedule regular sessions and venues, based on the needs and desires of the group members. We imagine a somewhat fluid formation of groups, formed and re-formed based on need and

availability. Over time, the groups will also refine the focus of their activities. We are interested in finding the right fit for everyone interested in participating.

Q. What would my commitment be to my group?

A. There is a grace period of three sessions, in which members can decide whether or not a group is a good "fit" for them. Once you have chosen the "right" group, we ask that you make a commitment of at least one year. The nature of that commitment throughout the year will be defined by the group, as it determines the frequency of meetings, location, whether food is involved, members' needs (such as allergies to pets, accessibility), etc.

Q. Is there a cost for joining a group?

A. No...joining a group is free of charge. A group may decide to do something that involves cost, but that will be up to the members.

Q. How big will the groups be?

A. Size depends on the group, but each has a minimum of four people plus a leader. Our goal is to allow all the groups to be large enough to welcome those who are interested -- but small enough for members to feel that their participation matters.

Q. Who can join an affinity group?

A. Membership in the groups is open to members of MJC, non-members who identify as Jewish and non-members who are hoping to connect with a Jewish community.

Q. Who can I contact for more information?

A. Please contact the MJC office for more information: (845) 357-2430.