

What is the Religious Practices Committee (RPC), what does it do, and how can you be involved?

Many of you have questions about the Religious Practices Committee. I hope that the information below will answer some of these. The RPC always welcomes any of your questions and comments.

According to the Beth Ami By-Laws the responsibilities of the RPC are as follows:

- The Religious Practices Committee shall have at least three (3) members and shall serve as liaison with the Rabbi. In conjunction with the Rabbi, the Committee shall determine the schedule and other details pertaining to the religious services and matters pertaining to the religious life at Congregation Beth Ami.
- Only Jewish members shall be deemed qualified to serve on the Religious Practices Committee. *[Note: This is the only committee in the By-Laws that has this restriction.]*
- The Rabbi of the Congregation shall be an ex-officio member of the Religious Practices Committee.
- The final decision in matters of halacha and liturgy shall rest with the Rabbi of the Congregation.

As a Conservative congregation, we must constantly struggle with what often seem like conflicts between observing the Biblical commandments and adapting these to the modern world. This is what makes Conservative Judaism both meaningful and challenging – this struggle is what keeps us a constantly evolving congregation. The RPC works with the Rabbi and others to find ways to meet the needs of our congregation with all of its diverse opinions.

The RPC is a diverse group with differing opinions, and our meetings often require us to debate and to come to decisions that we feel best meet the needs of our congregation. If you would like to join us, please let me know. You do not have to be an expert on religious practices; most of what I have learned about the practices of Conservative Judaism I have learned since being a member of this committee.

Even if you are not yet ready to join the RPC, we welcome your participation in developing services and programs: the more of you that are involved, the more we can create services and programs that meet all of our needs. There are a number of ways in which you can be involved. The Jewish calendar is filled with holidays that enable us to celebrate together in a variety of ways.

- We always welcome your opinions – what do you like and what would you like? Recently you were sent a survey on your thoughts about Friday night activities and about the High Holy Days. Your responses will be used in planning for future programs and services. I also welcome any comments or suggestions you have during the year.
- Help organize a special service or program. You can be a part of some of the special services, such as Rockin' Shabbat or Tu B'Shevat, even if you are not an “official” member of the RPC.
- Attend a meeting of the RPC. Please let me know if you would like to attend so I can make sure you have the correct information about the time and date of the meeting.

Keeping our kitchen Kosher, under the supervision of the Rabbi, is a part of the function of the RPC. The Kitchen Committee is a subcommittee of the RPC. It does an outstanding job of keeping our kitchen Kosher yet making it possible for those of us who do not keep Kosher to participate in Beth Ami events that involve food. (Do any not involve food?)

I look forward to your thoughts and participation.

Betty

Betty Boyd, Chair of the Religious Practices Committee

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