

Temple Sholom

263-10 Union Turnpike
Floral Park, NY 11004

(718)343-8660
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July, 28, 2009
7 Av 5769

Dear Friend of Temple Sholom,

On Sunday morning, August 16, at 11:00 AM, Temple Sholom of Floral Park is embarking on a new era for the community and our congregation.

We cordially invite you to the ground breaking of our new, state of the arts, and environmentally green facility. The ground breaking ceremony is scheduled for Sunday, August 16 at 11:00 am at 79-15 254 Street Floral Park, New York, the site of the New Temple Sholom.

Temple Sholom, a Reform Synagogue celebrating its 60th year as a congregation this year, is a member of the Union for Reform Judaism that has over 900 member congregations throughout North America. Temple Sholom has been in the same area for its entire existence and expects to open its new Synagogue building before the end of 2009.

We welcome your presence to help share in our joy of the day and our hope for the future of the congregation and Judaism. After the Ground Breaking ceremony at the new site, we will all depart for refreshments at our current building at 263-10 Union Turnpike, just 9 blocks east. We welcome you or a representative of your organization to speak at the ceremony if you wish; just please let us know prior to the event.

We are attaching the formal invitation for this event to this letter and please be sure to let us know if you are attending by calling the office at 718-343-8660 or by emailing templegroundbreaking@verizon.net. If you have any questions, comments or need any other information please contact us.

We look forward to seeing you on the 16th.

Shalom,

Jerome Demner
Member, Board of
Of Trustees, Financial
Secretary and Community
Relations Chairperson

Paul Trolio
President

Ruth Gerver
Executive VP

Temple Sholom

You are cordially invited to attend
Ground Breaking for our New Synagogue
Sunday Morning, August 16 at 11:00 am

Located at 79-15 254 Street, Floral Park, NY

In our 60th Year as a Congregation
The Members of Temple Sholom
Welcome you to join us as an honored guest
And to share in our Joy as we begin
Our Journey of Hope for the
Future of our Congregation

Refreshments will be served at
The conclusion of the Ceremony
During a reception of our honored guests
Taking place at our current address

263-10 Union Turnpike Floral Park, NY

Please RSVP by
Calling our Temple Office 718-343-8660
Or emailing templegroundbreakin@verizon.net

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For Immediate Release
Please Contact: Fred Fleisher
P: 718-343-2897
C: 347-229-7063

Event: Sunday, August 16 at 11:00 am at 79-15 254 Street Floral Park, NY

First New Reform Temple Building in 50 Years for Queens

Floral Park, NY – For the first time in 50 years, a Reform Congregation is beginning its construction of a new Synagogue in Queens. The ground breaking ceremony is scheduled for Sunday, August 16 at 11:00 am at 79-15 254 Street Floral Park, New York, the site of the New Temple Sholom.

For the past several decades Synagogues have been steadily disappearing from the landscape of Queens and other areas of New York City due in part to changing neighborhood demographics as well as the economic challenges of running large Synagogues and School facilities built during substantially different economic and social eras. Today's Jewish Worship and Educational facilities originally built to house very close to a thousand worshippers and beyond during the High Holy Days are now attracting only about a third of that number.

“Affiliations within our Synagogue’s Congregations are being lost at a much greater percentage than the changing demographics of our community”, stated Fred Fleisher the Vice President of Membership at Temple Sholom, “and we decided that it is up to us to do everything possible to try to turn this situation around. We all got together and said, if not us, then who?”

Until the Congregation of Temple Sholom decided to build a state of the art and more economically feasible facility, the prescriptive relief for every Temple’s economic woe was merger with another congregation. Recent mergers between many Synagogues in Queens and some even involving Western Nassau County Synagogues have created hundreds of disenfranchised Jews with no nearby Synagogue to spend Shabbat, the High Holy Days and other Religious Holidays and observances.

“Mergers seem to have accelerated the number of Jews abandoning their affiliations with Synagogues because at least half feel disenfranchised by the takeover,” said Paul Trolio the President of Temple Sholom. Mr. Trolio continued, “Our Congregation had the courage to do what no other Temple has done in recent memory – draw a line in the sand and say, enough! Our congregation voted almost unanimously to continue to worship closer to where we live and work rather than merge.”

Not only is this relatively small congregation with 118 members building a new Synagogue, it is also developing an incubator that will begin to grow strategies for the economic recovery of all Synagogues in the area.

“The paradigm of dues and fees supporting all congregations like ours no longer seems to be working.” Mr. Trolio stated in a recent presentation to the Board of Directors of the Queens Jewish Community Council, “Endowed investments yielding bountiful returns that were once a key ingredient in supporting all of our activities can no longer be counted on to bridge budget shortfalls due to today’s investment environment – that’s why we need to look at a much broader spectrum of options.”

Temple Sholom is beginning to establish relationships with the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York; Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty; Queens Jewish Community Council; Northeast Queens Jewish Community Council; the Samuel Field Y; NORC; and all agencies of the State and City and Federal Government that have already established programs to help community based groups like Temple Sholom in its effort to continue to be a viable as well as a contributing member of not only the Jewish Community but to the community at large.

There are only two remaining URJ (Union for Reform Judaism) Congregations in Queens – a county of 2.2 million people, while Houston, Texas a city now estimated to have about the same population as Queens, has 5 URJ congregations with about 10 times the total membership. Houston’s demographics are changing as fast if not faster than the demographics in Queens.

“Judging from what is happening all over the country,” Mr. Fleisher added, “we have to be better prepared socially and economically to deal with a changing environment. I think we are just beginning to answer those questions in a very profound way.”

About Temple Sholom - Temple Sholom celebrating its 60th year as a congregation this year is a Reform Synagogue and is a member of the Union for Reform Judaism that has over 900 member congregations throughout North America. Temple Sholom has been in the same area for its entire existence and expects to open its new Synagogue building before the end of 2009.