

SESSION 2

Redeveloping Congregational Identity So That Being Part of the Congregation Makes Meaning

Key ideas for discussion:

1. SAJ's renewed vision stands on five pillars:
 - a. Talmud Torah – Lifelong Learning
 - b. Tzedek – Social Justice
 - c. Kehillah - Community
 - d. Tarbut – Arts and Culture
 - e. Ruchaniyut – Spirituality
2. New identity and outward facing online presence. See their “Connect” webpage: <http://saj.nyc/connect/>
3. Decided not to measure success by numbers attending services. Built up different kinds of programming to create many avenues of entry and participation.
4. Took into account the synagogue's local context in light of other Jewish and meaning-making opportunities available to the people they'd like to attract. Built on aspects of their history and long-standing values that are unique, natural to their organization, and appealing to the needs and wants of contemporary potential members.



Rabbi Lauren Grabelle Herrmann

Rabbi Lauren Grabelle Herrmann's rabbinate has been driven by a desire to create inclusive Jewish communities of meaning, where a sense of belonging and community commitment is palpable. Before coming to SAJ in New York City, Rabbi Grabelle Herrmann was the founder of Kol Tzedek, an inclusive, dynamic and growing synagogue in West Philadelphia. She was also a founding clergy member of POWER, Philadelphians Organized to Witness, Empower and Rebuild. She became the rabbi of SAJ in 2015.

Connected Resources

SAJ: SAJ.nyc

Rabbi Lauren on *Medium*: <https://medium.com/@rabbilauren/latest>

Rabbis without Borders: RabbisWithoutBorders.org