

Temple Emanu-El Code of Ethics

BACKGROUND

2019: The Union for Reform Judaism created a Code of Ethics and established an ongoing committee to assist congregations in developing their own code of ethics. The initiative also resulted in a guide to help member congregations develop and implement their own ethics codes.

2020: The Temple Emanu-El Board of Trustees addressed complaints against a congregant on an ad hoc basis. This congregant's membership was revoked. As part of this process, the Board requested an ethics policy be written and a procedure for addressing allegations be developed to guide future complaints or allegations against a congregant. A task force was formed and goals articulated for the project.

2021: Temple Emanu-El hired the Arcadi Jackson law firm to gather facts following allegations against Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman emerging from an investigation and findings of Central Synagogue in New York. The Arcadi Jackson report found no instances or allegations of inappropriate behavior in regard to Rabbi Zimmerman during his tenure at our congregation. As part of its report, Arcadi Jackson recommended Temple Emanu-El develop a Congregational Code of Ethics and communicate it to all members.

2023: The Board of Trustees approved the Congregational Code of Ethics. A statement that accompanied the Code of Ethics underscored its importance: "As we learn from the past, and look toward the future, a code of ethics that reinforces our values and sets forth expectations for congregant behavior and standards is vital to our community."