

# Temple Israel of Natick

## Sustainable Commitment - Frequently Asked Questions

### ***What is Sustainable Commitment?***

Sustainable Commitment (SC) is an alternative method of raising the funds that we collect via our current dues structure. Rather than billing congregants for their dues, congregants pledge a maximum sustaining commitment. SC changes the dynamic from one of “them” billing us to one of Tzedakah, by asking members to make a personal committed contribution to the sacred community that is our Temple.

### ***How does Sustainable Commitment work?***

SC works by replacing the current seven membership categories with only two: one-adult households and two-adult households. The Temple provides a sustaining amount for each category that, if all members paid would cover the portion of the budget covered by dues. Using their sustaining amount, members decide how much they can charitably commit to sustaining the Temple.

### ***Do I have to pay the Sustaining Amount?***

No. Members decide how much they can charitably commit to sustaining the Temple. Obviously, if everyone pays the sustaining amount, the financial health of the Temple will be better.

### ***I can't pay the Sustaining Amount, do I have to ask for an abatement?***

No. There is no abatement process with SC. A fundamental concept of Sustainable Commitment is that each member household decides for themselves how much they can charitably commit to sustaining the Temple. Each member's decision is private and is not shared with any other member. Only the professional staff will know how much a member has committed to supporting the Temple.

### ***What happens if my circumstances change?***

Again, we recognize that member's circumstances can change. If a member's financial situation has changed, they simply need to contact the Director of the Temple and make an agreed upon adjustment to their commitment.

### ***What happens if I don't pay my commitment by the deadline?***

Sustainable Commitment does not change the nature of the obligation that members have to the Temple. Currently, the Temple communicates with members who are in arrears and works with them to settle their account before the end of the fiscal year (June 30). Each situation is different and based on unique facts and circumstances. The Temple has the responsibility to ensure that all members honor their obligations, and will work with members who are willing to honor their obligations.

### ***Why implement Sustainable Commitment?***

Since the Temple's founding, congregants have paid dues to fund a portion of the Temple's operating budget. These dues were based on age with multiple dues levels. This system is no longer working. For

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many years, actual collected dues has fallen short of budgeted dues, despite an annual increase in dues. Moreover, there has been a steady rise of dues abated, to the point where now almost 25% of all members receive an abatement. Clearly the current system is not working well. Moreover, the abatement process can be an uncomfortable experience for members. Sustainable Commitment (SC) is an opportunity for us to reframe and reinvigorate member's relationship with the Temple, starting with the conversation around dues.

### ***What happens if I move away and/or no longer wish to be a Temple member?***

Any amount committed that has not been paid would no longer need to be paid. If the entire amount has already been paid, a prorated portion could be returned to cover the portion of the year that you are no longer a member.

### ***What about High Holiday Tickets?***

As part of membership, a two adult household receives two tickets and a single adult household receives one. Members can still purchase additional tickets as needed.

### ***How do I pay my commitment?***

There will be no change to the current payment system. Members may still pay in full, in two installments or in ten installments. There would be no change to the payment method (check, ACH or credit card).

### ***What about Religious school and/or Nursery school tuition?***

Sustainable Commitment does not affect either religious school or nursery school tuitions.

### ***When will SC be implemented?***

It is hoped that Sustainable Commitment will be implemented for the 2014 – 2015 fiscal year.

### ***How will you know if SC works?***

If approved by the Board, all members will be asked to provide their commitment amount in April 2014. Any member who does not supply a commitment amount will be assumed to want to pay the sustainment amount. All commitments will be tabulated near the end of April. If the aggregate commitments equal more than a specific target (\$680,000) then the Temple will move forward with implementing Sustainable Commitment. If the aggregate commitments fall short of the \$680,000 target, then the Board will revert to the current age-based dues structure.

(Note: The target of \$680,000 is equal to the Dues line from the FY14 budget.)