

Presidential Message

May 2018

May 2018 – Preparing for the Annual Meeting

As we get to the end of the fiscal year, it's time to start preparing for our Annual Meeting, scheduled for June 3. FY2018 has been a year that has lived up to many of the expectations that we laid out during our meeting last June. This month, I wanted to give you a brief recap and a look ahead.

We've had another wonderful year under the spiritual guidance of **Rabbi Marc** and **Sherry Barnes**. Our Shabbat, High Holidays, Chanukah, Purim, and Passover experiences were as excellent as ever. Rabbi Marc is continuing to explore ways to further enrich other holidays, such as Simcha Torah and Shavuot. If you've been away from services, I encourage you to see how the Rabbi Marc and Sherry have continued to shape our religious events.

Socially, we've been having a good year as well. Our normal Brotherhood and Sisterhood events continue to please. Cabaret Night has become a mid-winter staple. We also had a successful community dessert social. This month, we're having our first Spring Starry Night dinner dance. We're hoping that this event will draw interest from our congregants who are just interested in getting together for a good time.

Throughout the year, though, we've seen signs of trouble. By now, everybody knows that Beth El and SSA are using our building. We've also been hosting other community activities such as the TVCCA Senior Hot Lunches. Our friends from Beth El are using our space because Beth El was forced to face the reality that an aging, shrinking congregation was not able to continue operating in a building that was becoming a draw on their resources. It's only natural to be concerned that Temple Emanu-El is on the same trajectory.

I'm not going to beat around the bush. Our building is in need of repairs, and none of us is getting younger. However, I'm here to tell you that I'm optimistic that Temple Emanu-El can continue to be the center of the Jewish community of Southeastern Connecticut. Right now, our membership is about 200 family units, which is nice, but has room for growth.

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Our mainstay members might be getting older, but in many ways we're getting younger. Our rabbi is a new kid on the block. We continue to bring in new families to our Hebrew School, and I'm excited to report that **Armi Rowe** and **Jennifer Zettler** are preparing to become our new school administrators as we prepare to celebrate the retirement of the tireless **Barbara Kallan** and **Marc Goldsmith**. Repairs that we've made and repairs that are planned will keep our building operational. And thanks to the efforts of Scott Wolfe and Chris Rock, we have paid down and privatized a good deal of our mortgage.

Still, all of our efforts require your financial support. We're a small congregation, and there's not much room for congregants to count on the generosity of others. We've operated with a minimal budget, but we still need to work toward our mission to build a vibrant community. We'll be going over the details of our fiduciary needs at the annual meeting, but I can tell you that your membership carries a financial responsibility. It's my hope that you appreciate the role that Temple Emanu-El plays in your life and that you will reward our efforts with your generosity when you send us your pledges this summer.