

Presidential Message

December 2018

At the time that I wrote last month's article, it was before the tragedy at the Tree of Life Congregation and the agonizing days that followed. It was a week that was seared into our collective memory. Yet, after a subsequent tragedy in Thousand Oaks and an eventful Mid-Term Election the world seems to have moved on a couple times over.

Still here we are on Dayton Road, working to make our Temple as safe as we can for you.

Whether you're aware of it or not, we stood up a Security Committee over the Summer. The Committee is chaired by Rich McCaffrey and Michael Haynes. Perhaps you noticed over the High Holidays that we were beginning to institute emergency exit guidance before services? Even subtle, simple efforts like these require hours of discussion and consultation with local Law Enforcement.

The committee struggles with conflicting constraints? How do we emphasize safety and security while still being the haimish, welcoming community that we project ourselves as? How do we ensure that we can keep the building safe with the tools that we have available to us? What more can we be doing within the constraints of our budget? As usual with Temple Emanuel committees, the people serving on this committee are not paid consultants, they are simply congregants who have concern and a desire to invest some of their free time using their skills for the betterment of our community.

Our nascent policies were on display during the High Holidays, but quickly eased up after Simchat Torah. Pittsburgh added a renewed sense of urgency to the committee's cause. A comprehensive security policy is in final review. The congregation at large should not need to know the explicit details of how the Temple leadership and staff is being trained to respond to a crisis, but you will hopefully notice more friends greeting you when you come into the building, more routine guidance on where emergency exits are, and more programming available at the Temple from groups such as the Waterford Police.

What we're asking for, as always, is your support. You may find a locked door to the building where you didn't find one before. If the door isn't being monitored by a greeter, there is a doorbell on the door to the atrium. If you're able and willing, the Brotherhood is coordinating greeters for Friday Night services. Jonathan Rowe is heading up that effort. Do you have the resources to help us improve our infrastructure? Please contact Rich, Mike, or myself. We've got ideas that we'd like to implement, given the budget.

My best wishes to you and your family for a happy and safe holidays.