

From the Rabbi's Desk

January 2019

Chaverim,

When you read this bulletin or weekly emails from our office, it is easy to see all of the *special* events going on at Temple Emanu-El. Many people put great effort into special events. Of course, like you, I can't help but look forward to each one. By the time you read this, the Temple Emanu-El social action committee will have just completed another very special project to provide meals to area first responders. Matthew Shulman, Sybil Nassau, and Karen Bloustine have worked hard to organize the effort. Many people have given time, materials, food, or money to let our public servants know how much we appreciate them. This is just one of many special events since the High Holy Days. These special events testify to Temple Emanu-El's mission to build a vibrant community.

On the other hand, let's talk about *routine* things. There are many things that might get outshined by special events. We will host the JFEC Adult learning program each Sunday in January. Our "Purim at the Improv" theme this year might be new but Purim is regular enough. Cabaret is just around the corner – get your act together. Pesach will be here soon and we'll have a packed house for First Seder. Sisterhood dinners and movie nights and Brotherhood gatherings occur regularly. Our Social Action crew is frequently at the New London Meal Center or out on a Habitat for Humanity build. But let's get even a little *more* mundane. We have religious school most Sundays and Wednesdays; kosher lunch on Mondays; SSA every day; Brotherhood bagels and coffee on Sunday mornings; Jewish Community High School Monday nights; Confirmation, Adult Hebrew, Cantillation, and Introduction to Judaism classes. We host Nar-Anon, Hope after Loss, and Crohn's and Colitis support groups. There are a lot of wonderful *routine* things going on in our synagogue.

But here is the most routine thing going on at Temple Emanu-El. It is so routine that a lot of us have just forgotten about it. It's just here, week in and week out, like clockwork. It happens so dependably, like the setting of the sun. Okay, you get it, I'm sure. It's Shabbat. We spice it up once a month on First Fridays with Kabbalat Shabbat sing along at 5:30 and communal Shabbat dinner at 6 P.M. You can't beat our First Friday dinner anywhere – good

food, friends new and old, the table set and we do the dishes – and Sherry and I sing with you. Tipping isn't even allowed – although donations on other days are appreciated.

Every week, Shabbat comes in at Temple Emanu-El at 7:30PM (except First Fridays). Shabbat. A time to regroup, rejoice, reconnect with God, connect with community, celebrate simchas, give thanks, learn from our tradition, accept and give prayers for healing, to meditate, and also to mourn. All of this, relevant to how we live and think today. This is Reform Judaism. Every week in just 75 minutes followed by an Oneg. Every Friday night, no fail, every week of the year. I only mention this because maybe you've forgotten the most special thing given to us. It really can't happen without you. As Ahad Ha'am said, "more than Jews have kept the Sabbath, the Sabbath has kept Jews." I know everyone can't make it every Friday night. That doesn't stop *me* from hoping to see *you* every Shabbat.

L'Shalom,
Rabbi Marc