

Presidential Message

April 2019

Unfortunately, if you stall long enough, bulletin article topics present themselves. Like many of you, I'm sure, this past week's tragedy in Christchurch, New Zealand, has left me with a bunch of confused, disjointed reactions. None of these seem coherent enough to form a full article, so I think I'll just share the fragments.

...Another shooting at a house of worship serves to remind us that security at the Temple remains an utmost concern. Rich McCaffrey and the Security Committee are finalizing the Temple's security plan, which we hope to ratify at April's board meeting and roll out to the congregation in the coming weeks. Everyone is reminded, though, that on Friday nights, the normal entrance will be through the social hall doors. These doors will be locked, but attended throughout services. On Sundays and Wednesdays, the normal entrance will be through the school atrium doors. Again, these doors will be locked, but manned. Please be patient if you have to wait a moment for entry, but I promise a friendly face will be there to greet you.

...I hope that an episode from this past weekend will not become a trend. During a vigil at NYU, attendees lashed out at none other than Chelsea Clinton, who was in attendance. All this time, I thought the struggle was to get people to feel empathy and compassion for others. Are we heading toward an environment where we're not going to be able to accept compassion from others?

...Our nation's celebration of diversity in politics is not having its intended effect. The voices that get attention are those who complain that their point of view is being treated unfairly by others, and they feel they deserve special consideration. The problem is that everybody then begins to seek his or her own special consideration. The presidential candidates run into trouble over and over again when they pander to the specific group that they're talking to that day. The politicians running for president need to figure out the values that unite us instead of the unique values that play to the group that they're addressing that day.

...facebook fast...

...Rabbi Marc continues to honor our congregation by being our face of compassion and unity in the community. On the Friday morning of the attack in New Zealand, a colleague of mine at work came back from afternoon prayer at the Islamic Center in our old home on Fort Street and told me that Rabbi Marc had been present at their prayer session. Contrary to the Chelsea Clinton story, my friend expressed gratitude to me for Marc's support, much the same way that we were thankful to have their imam speak at our observance for Pittsburgh. I hope that we can continue to support one another as fellow human beings and not give into forces that wish to drive wedges between us.