

Presidential Message

February 2020

Dear Friends,

I took on the role of Temple President during difficult personal times. There was great political upheaval at my job, my mother-in-law was becoming increasingly ill and Armi and I moved her in with us out of necessity, my mother on Long Island was having health issues and several other ongoings in my life were challenging. To be candid, being President doesn't reduce stress. All past presidents can confirm that. We do it out of devotion. There is a lot that must be managed.

This past fall, my department at work was eliminated. I am not nearly the first person from our temple who worked in the pharmaceutical industry to be impacted in this way. Most have moved away because that's where the jobs are. Being that I'm still at a point in my life where a regular income is needed, I began my search for a new job.

I landed a new career opportunity with a company based in New York City. This requires me to be away at least three days per work week. With the responsibilities of the new job and the remote location from Waterford, I didn't know if I would be able to sustain the tasks of President. I discussed this with the Board. I thought we could try video conferencing for Board meetings as a solution, and was willing to give it a try. However, there are many day-to-day things that need to be accounted for as well.

In early January I had serious health crisis. It was beyond a wakeup call. It was my body ordering me to stop trying to juggle multiple responsibilities. I wish I could say, "Hey, I'll just stop working!" That is unrealistic. Therefore it was imperative that I step down from another responsibility. I will no longer be able to carry out the duties of Temple President.

I and the temple are blessed to have a backup in my life. Jo-el Fernandez does not intend to support my family financially; however, she is fully prepared to become the President of Temple Emanu-El. I convinced her to be VP after my first presidency, and I had to have her as my VP because she's a brilliant, honest, compassionate and strategic leader. We are lucky to have her. I look forward to working with her on transitioning the role.

Please welcome Jo-el with the same vigor that you have embraced me with over the years.

Thank you.

Jonathan