

Presidential Message

April 2020

Shalom chaverim,

I kept putting off writing this message, hoping that life would return to normal. But as I type this message in mid-March, life is as far from normal as it has ever been in my lifetime. We have canceled all Temple activities through at least the end of April, including our beloved Passover seder. We are all isolated in our homes, afraid to venture out for anything but life's absolute necessities. And as of a few days ago, there is nowhere to go anyway. Bars, restaurants, retail stores, theaters----all closed.

And yet, there is beauty. Beauty in the excitement expressed by many Temple members about the 1st live-streamed service that Rabbi Ekstrand and Cantorial Soloist Sherry Barnes led on 3/13/20, and even more excitement about upcoming virtual services, Havdalah, and living room concerts. Even though we cannot meet face to face at this time, we are no less a community. In this disconcerting, anxiety-provoking time, our Temple members continue to come together in love----via YouTube, via Facebook, via Zoom, and via good old –fashioned telephone chats. We are still a community, even if we cannot currently gather at 29 Dayton Road.

The Temple board has been busy despite these challenges. Regarding space-sharing with Congregation Beth El, they continue to wish to rent space in our building to create a chapel in the fall of 2021, when Solomon Schechter and All Souls congregation are no longer renting space. However, they are uncertain about how the possibility of a community campus fits into their long-term plans, and discussions have ceased until their intentions are a little clearer. As always, the board is committed to transparency and welcomes any feedback from congregants. We received a great deal of feedback from many of you at the Coffee and Conversation groups that occurred during January and February. Please see the report in this bulletin for a summary of that feedback. The board also had some difficult discussions regarding financial concerns. Unfortunately, since the March board meeting, these concerns have been further compounded by the cancellation of several events that would have raised some additional funds for Temple operations. We recognize that many congregants may also be in difficult financial straits due to lost income or increased expenses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. But if you are able, any additional contribution to help us balance our budget for this fiscal year would be especially appreciated.

While we all get through these difficult times, please don't forget to reach out to friends, especially those who live alone.

Adonai Oz L'Amo Yitein; Adonai Yivarekh Et Amo Ba'shalom.

May G-d grant strength to all of G-d's people; May G-d bless G-d's people with peace.

Jo-el Fernandez