

# Presidential Message

July 2021

So I'll be writing this article in New Zealand, but (hopefully) receiving the Temple flyer in Connecticut. How strange. For those of you who don't know, my family and I have spent the last 7 months in New Zealand. I traveled here for a rotation as a student and always wanted to go back. After considering going several times, we felt there was no better time than the height of a pandemic. We feel very fortunate that, except for a few minor blips, we have essentially been living a normal life. The kids have been going to school. We have been going to restaurants and stores. It's as if we have been in an alternate universe while the rest of the world has struggled to get COVID-19 under control.

For those of you who don't know me. Hi. My name is Andy. My family has been Temple members for about 7 years now. My wife Adrienne works in Mystic. We are both from southern New England, but ended up here because of the Navy and have decided to stay. We have 3 children – Jillian, Zoe, and Jack. You may have seen them running around the stage or the arc depending on the weather. The kids love the religious school and have made many friends. They are looking forward to seeing them in person either this summer or in the fall.

As I've been tasked to write this on pretty much the last day before we begin our journey back home, I'm going to stick with the high points. First, we are coming off two Congregational Meetings of great importance. The first, of course, was the approval to move forward with the Community Campus. As Tom Smith highlighted in that meeting and our annual meeting, the cost implications of not going forward with this were not looking positive. Our team, led by Gail Weber, is committed to doing what is best for Temple Emanu-El in the short and especially long term. It's important that we take into account the fact that we want to build bridges with other communities which will in turn enhance Temple Emanu-El. Rabbi Ekstrand has started this important work and the campus will help continue this.

While we will be working diligently on the campus, it's important to not lose focus of what OUR mission and vision is. Our job to build a vibrant community. There are so many people who already do so much to keep the Temple running. I think there are many more people who would like to be involved in some way, but either don't know how or are fearful of the commitment. The Temple has plenty of committees looking for involvement. The social action committee, the religious school committee, the membership committee and now the AV committee are some of my favorite groups to point out to those motivated enough to join on. Really, all of these committees (and more, I have a list) are what you make of them. You could simply show up at meetings or you could take on a more active role. It's all volunteer; there is no commitment. If you don't like one you could always try another. Please let me or anyone else on the board or Roberta know if you would like to join on. Or if you would like to host an event or a get-together as a one off, that would be great too. It could be as simple as scheduling a meeting place and time and letting everyone know you will be there for anyone who would like to join.

The more involvement we have, the more people out in the community who will want to join us and the less we will have to hear Tom Smith talk all his doom and gloom.

One last thing Roberta wanted me to mention and I'll just blurt it out because I'm not very good at asking people for money. We would appreciate if you could get your pledge forms back as soon as possible after they are received. This helps with our planning and forecasting for the year. Please reach out if there are any questions with the new structure.

I appreciate the faith put in me to be President and hope to continue to help guide Temple Emanu-El in a positive direction. See you all soon.

Andy