

UPDATES FROM THE BOARD

As we enter the dog days of summer, you should know that your Temple Sinai Board is hard at work. There is a lot on our plate:

High Holy Days: If you haven't heard, this year, our High Holy Days will be virtual with a twist. The major services will be conducted via our ZOOM link (a password will be needed), but Rabbi—being as creative as ever—has scheduled many ways for us to experience a physical connection with each other and with nature during these Days of Awe. One of the big changes will be the length of services. Something we have all learned is that our capacity for “ZOOM” time in one sitting is much shorter than our capacity to attend a service in-person. This means that you will not be subjected to a speech from the President! I have also pledged not to raise any fundraising matters during the High Holy Days. Look for more details about our High Holy Days offerings on our website and in the weekly messages from Rabbi.

The Month of Elul (August 21-September 17): With physical distancing still being our reality, we are thinking of ways to make the High Holy Days even more special and meaningful. Rabbi's idea is to use the entire month of Elul as a “lead in.” In Rabbi's words: “Elul ... is a time to begin reflecting on our actions, making apologies and amends, and consider how we can be better people in the coming year. This year, to deepen our High Holy experience, we will be ‘leaning into’ Elul, offering gateways into the work of the holy days.” So expect big offerings from Temple for the entire month of Elul. There will be something special happening during services every weekend, we will combine with OZ to offer special classes every Thursday evening, and there will be other special activities. Please look to more messages from Rabbi and our website for details.

Rabbi's Contract Renewal: Believe it or not, we have commenced the process of renewing Rabbi's contract. Our ad hoc committee headed by David Collins, and including Michael Rosenberg, Susan Leff and Steve Greenfield, along with drafting assistance from David Greenberg, are in the midst of ongoing conversations with Rabbi and the Board. We anticipate having a final proposed contract vetted and recommended by the Board before our Annual Meeting scheduled for Sunday, November 22, 2020, and voting on the proposal at the meeting.

Budget: We are in the midst of budgeting for 2021. Due to the amazing efforts of our financial team, Temple Sinai secured a PPP loan and this will likely be converted to a grant (meaning we will not have to pay it aback). We also have an abundance of generous members (more on that in a later message). Consequently—and this again falls into the believe it or not category— 2020 is shaping up to be a good fiscal year. This gives us a lot of options as we prepare our 2021 budget and makes your input at the Annual Meeting more meaningful than ever.

Fundraising: You know, fundraising is intricately tied into the budget and, at the same time, has a life of its own. In 2020, while simple donations continue to be our lifeblood, we have not been able to hold any in-person fundraising events due to the Coronavirus. Consequently, we are now focused on other methodologies. A new and exciting donating opportunity, and a way for each of us to connect with other members in a more personal way during the High Holy Days, is to have a professional photo or video taken (by Elaine and David Punia!) and include it with a greeting to other members to include in our Elul and High Holy Day celebrations. Please look for forthcoming

Message From Your President August 13, 2020

details. We have started a planned giving campaign asking members to name Temple Sinai as a beneficiary in a will or trust. Planning for our Annual Appeal is ongoing. Look for it to kick off soon. This year we are seeking 100% participation! And we are just at the very beginning of conversations about a “capital” campaign. More details about all of these fundraising opportunities will be posted on our website, emails and future “Messages from Your President.”

Religious School: Religious School classes will be virtual at least for the first half of the year. Our Religious School Team of Morah Judy, Lisa Greenblott, Julie Baer and Rabbi have done a tremendous amount of work to put together a program that will be both exciting and challenging for our “next generation.” We also expect to have pop-up gatherings for our kids as permitted. Educators are probably the group most impacted by COVID-19, so it has really been a herculean effort to come up with this viable plan. Please go to our website for details and pass the word on to your friends and families that religious school at Temple Sinai will be a fun and learned place to be this fall.

Reopening Temple Sinai: The Board confirmed prior decisions not to reopen for services or to third parties seeking rentals at this time. There are multiple reasons for this and include the fact that, consistent with every other Reform congregation, the High Holy Days will be virtual so there is no imperative to push this. In addition, with public schools scheduled to start on September 8th, it makes sense to wait for any new information that results from this statewide experiment in coronavirus safety. We will take another hard look at this during our October Board Meeting.

Your feedback and comments on reopening or any other Temple matter are always welcome.

Shalom,

Your President, Doug Marden