



**TEMPLE B'NAI CHAIM
ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
THURSDAY, MAY 27, 2021
ANNUAL REPORT**

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Introduction

We have introduced the concept of an Annual Report to begin to provide you with Committee Reports and a list of TBC donors (from July 1, 2020 through April 30, 2021) so that you have this information all in one place and can review it in advance of our Congregational Meeting. Over time, we hope to expand this report so that it is a more complete representation of what has taken place at TBC during the year and all of the volunteers who donate their time, energy and expertise.

Please read through this report and submit your questions to susancfarber3@gmail.com in advance of our meeting.

Ritual Committee Report

Ritual Committee 2020-2021 Members: Bonnie Heft, Chair, Cantor Dunkerley, Steve West-Rosenthal, Russ Robbins, Iris Busch, Marlene Serby, Michael Wolfman, Marilyn Van Raalte, Valerie Rosenson, Executive Committee Advisor

Accomplishments:

1. Effective collegial relationship forged with Cantor Dunkerley.
2. High Holiday services planning included soliciting congregants' take "away moments " via personal calls. Shabbat Shuva service was lay led. Six services for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, live moments included Rosh Hashanah Shofar Blowing, Tashlich and Day 2 Rosh Hashanah out of doors spiritual nature walk. Yom Kippur study groups were lay led and well attended. High holiday services and activities were well attended and received. Committee partnered with Sisterhood to give out High Holiday goodie bags in lieu of Break the Fast.
3. Tot Shabbat, Family Shabbat, Adult Shabbat and Torah reading Shabbat services were made available. Times changed to work with Zoom format.
4. Shabbat services were planned to incorporate Religious School students' learning. There was much planned student participation, though on Zoom format.
5. B'nai Mitzvah Shabbat services were postponed but all were held safely under a tent in the courtyard. Services were Zoomed as well.
6. Creative "Chanukah under the Stars Menorah Lighting" with bonfires was held with gifts distributed to families from the Sisterhood.
7. With tremendous participation from congregants and much work done by Kiki Kahn and Daniel Curtis, "Shabbat From Our House to Yours" was created, to be used for secular holiday times when little attendance was expected. This was very beautiful and successful.
8. Sisterhood Shabbat with WRJ Speaker was both well attended and received.
9. Purim Megillah reading and Wine Tasting was spearheaded by Susan Farber and held via ZOOM.
10. A second night Passover Seder was held with ritual objects and a simplified but complete Haggadah on Zoom.
11. Plans are in effect for out of doors Shabbat services in the Courtyard beginning May 14.

Goals for next year.

Increase attendance and participation at Shabbat services and B'nai Mitzvah services. Make attendance mandatory for B'nai Mitzvah students for a given number of services. Return to services that highlight grades in the Religious school and continually offer opportunities for students and parents to participate in all services. Utilize the services of a student Rabbi during High Holiday services. Continue capabilities to stream or ZOOM services and events.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bonnie Heft, Chair

Education Committee Report - May 2021

Submitted by Dara Marceau

Committee Members

Stacy Barenberg, Allison Berger, Cantor Harriet Dunkerley, Rachel Langberg, June Mara, Dara Marceau, Jennifer Rubin, Michele Rudnicki, Rachel Sanderson, Robyn Scatena, Elise Serby, Joe Sondheimer, Marilyn Van Raalte

Accomplishments

The Education Committee's culture of enthusiastic participation and collaboration has been especially valuable in supporting the unique needs of the Religious School in the 2020-2021 school year. Having ordered, assembled, and delivered curricular materials to families throughout the year, the committee played a crucial role in the successful implementation of a brand-new, virtual curriculum. Consistently high student attendance and excitement among students and teachers are a testament to the success of the instruction. Without the participation of the Education Committee, the Religious School could not have logistically managed to deliver this labor-intensive curriculum.

The Education Committee also served as a sounding board and provided feedback about how students and families were receiving Religious School and Hebrew instruction, Tot Shabbat, and Family Services. This specific feedback, as well as more general discussions about aspects of TBC culture, have been particularly helpful to our new Cantor/Education Director; our ongoing communication provides valuable insight and allows for informed adjustments to be made.

The Education Committee is always seeking ways to generate excitement, encourage family participation, and build community. In addition to helping with the planning and implementation of the Religious School's well-attended, in-person events, Education Committee members have been reaching out to families directly, offering personal invitations to events and services.

Vision for Next Year

As members of the Education Committee, we see ourselves as Religious School ambassadors, charged with generating excitement about the school, Tot Shabbat, and Family Services--and by extension, inviting membership. Education Committee members, for example, will actively encourage participation in Tot Shabbat and Family services and will serve as ushers at these events. Next year, as we return to full, in-person instruction, the committee looks forward to taking a lead role in creating a culture of parent involvement. This will include committee members establishing class parent roles to enhance communication and connections and to

generate enthusiasm for family participation in student learning. This will also provide a much-needed mechanism for inspiring and empowering parents to create and lead family events. The committee looks forward to expanding our communication and interaction with teaching staff through these class parent roles.

The Religious School will continue to rely on the Education Committee to generate ideas for and to provide logistical support for special events (i.e., opening day, Chanukah celebration, Purim Carnival, and closing day). We will also provide ongoing feedback from families regarding instruction, Tot Shabbat, and Family Services.

The Education Committee is enthusiastic about its role as valuable partners of the Religious School and is dedicated to its improvement and expansion.

TBC Membership Update – May 2021

The opportunity that we have been awaiting for years is finally here, and now we have to capitalize on it!

New families are, and have been, coming into every town in the area, and they are changing the demographics in the area. We are seeing more families with kids in the school systems and many moving from New York City and Westchester are Jewish. We have been getting calls even before people move here asking about our Temple and wanting to know more about the Jewish community locally. To capitalize on this influx, we did a postcard campaign to all families who have bought houses in the major towns we serve over the last 6 months and invited them to participate in our Purim Wine Tasting, our Art Sale, etc. We plan to continue our outreach with a push on social media to connect with them and encourage them to engage with our congregation.

We hope that all of our congregation will be our emissaries and bring our warm and welcoming TBC ethos by reaching out and getting to know new neighbors on your street and in your neighborhood or in your school and sports program. Let them know we are here, tell them about our community, forward them Chailites and encourage them to come to an evening or school event with you. You can always have them call us and find out more!

Going forward, in all our event planning we will focus on how each event can help connect new families, particularly those with children, in order to help ensure that TBC can continue to grow and thrive in the future.

Respectfully submitted,
Kiki Cahn & Susan Farber
TBC Membership

SOCIAL ACTION @ TBC
Jane Alexander and Peggy Zamore- Co-Chairs
Tikkun Olam- Repairing the World
In this most challenging time- We all need to pitch in!
Check out ChaiLites for upcoming calls to action.

The desire to make the world a better place is the only requirement for participation in the Social Action Committee. From the smallest job to the most complex, each act of kindness and caring makes a huge impact on achieving social justice and equity.

COMMITTEE

The Social Action Committee of TBC provides the focus and mechanism for congregants to get involved in a multitude of projects with very varied objectives and populations served. Without regard to religion, the Social Action Committee provides assistance to a wide variety of projects locally, nationally and internationally.

FUNDING

Support for all of our projects comes directly from our membership through various ways to donate including;

- A general donation to the fund from members in celebration of events such as Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Weddings, Anniversaries, Birthdays, Births, Deaths.
- Directed donation to one of our projects

PROJECTS

The committee has numerous on-going activities and is always open to feasible new suggestions. We are a "hands on" committee that both initiates and joins in on projects affecting both the Jewish and non-Jewish segments of our community. We are an active member of the Wilton Interfaith Action Committee (WI-ACT) & recently joined the COVID-19 Community Corps, a nationwide, grassroots network of leaders committed to ending the pandemic and empowering people with vaccine information.

COVID-19 Vaccine Information Project

Laundry Love Jointly with Sisterhood

Diaper/Wipes Collection

Menstrual Supplies Collection

Dorothy Day Hospitality House aka Danbury Soup Kitchen -- Staff/Donate Funds

Community Food Pantries i.e. Our Daily Bread, Danbury -- Staff/ Donate Funds

Thanksgiving Gift cards through Wilton social services department

Chanukah Gift Cards for Wilton children

Rise Against Hunger-- Meal packing with food sent to a country in need. **On hold for now ☹**

Danbury Farmers' Market Community Collaborative- Fresh Produce Food Security Project

Bridge of Hope - International Cystic Fibrosis Project

We always need help. The more members we have the more progress we can make in repairing the world, in Tikkun Olam. To get involved contact:

socialaction@templebnaichaim.org

ADULT EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

2021 May TBC Congregational Meeting

The TBC Adult Education programs in the past year were presented monthly. They varied from pure fun, movie and deli night through Covid information, and How to deal with Depression and Anxiety during Covid. A presentation on Covid and Jewish ethics was totally engaging to the audience.

Our talented congregants made presentations on diverse subjects: Cosmology, Who Wrote the Bible, How to deal with Difficult People, and Arts During the Holocaust.

Objectives for next year are to increase audience participation and to support the new member initiatives undertaken by TBC.

If you have a passion you would like to share with TBC, please contact the Adult Ed committee.

Respectfully submitted by Barbara Dobbin and Bruce Miller on behalf of the entire committee.

Temple B'nai Chaim Sisterhood
Report to Congregational Meeting
May 2021

Sisterhood continues to play an active role in the TBC and wider community, with a broad presentation of activities and special events, support of the synagogue and its programs, and engaged participation in social action and service to our neighboring towns.

Among the highlights since the last congregational meeting are:

1. Giving a Chanukah gift to each group attending the Chanukah Havdallah service.
2. Hosting a well-attended and well-received author's talk by a former educator at TBC, whose novel was newly published. *All Things That Deserve to Perish* was also a selection of the Book Group.
3. Co-hosting the annual Tu B'Shvat Seder with Norwalk Hadassah.
4. Programming a series of "Women of the Bible" discussions, featuring Cantor Dunkerley.
5. Participating in the Women of Reform Judaism's Fried Leadership Conference.
6. Coordinating the Shaloch Manot fundraiser for TBC, and delivering bags containing hamantashen, grape juice, groggers, and recipes to attendees of the Purim celebration.
7. Planning an in-person end-of-year dinner.

REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

May 19, 2021

David Schwartz, Chair

During the past year, the Governance Committee took the following actions:

1. The Committee reviewed the Temple's Constitution and Bylaws and recommended to the Board that they be modified to:
 - Reflect the current clergy structure
 - Reflect that audits will be undertaken as required by Connecticut or Federal law
 - Update and clean-up committee language
2. The Re-Opening Task Force of the Governance Committee recommended guidelines to the Board for the re-starting post-Covid of in-person events at the Temple.
3. The Committee appointed a sub-committee (the Nominating Committee) for the purpose of recommending to the Board candidates for open Board and Executive Committee positions, including First Vice President, Treasurer and two Trustee-at-Large positions.

For the upcoming year, the Governance Committee plans to take the following actions:

1. The Re-Opening Task Force will regularly update its guidance recommendations as new information becomes available.
2. The Committee will do a review of the governance policies of the Temple for any best practice updates.

Communications Committee Report to the Congregation

Committee Members: June Mara, Stephen Davis, Jodi Stewart, Barbara Dobbin, Susan Farber

Over the course of the past year, the Communications Committee has worked to improve ongoing communications to the congregation, the idea being that the planning and activities of the Board should be discussed regularly – not only at our congregational meetings. We have succeeded in:

- Expanding Chailites
- Developing TBC Connections – a bimonthly magazine-like newsletter that highlights leadership’s vision and activities
- Improving our exposure in local media.

For the coming year, we will continue to improve Chailites, our website and local media exposure. We will also particularly focus on social media and are currently in discussions with a social media consultant to help us develop a content strategy and calendar. Our ultimate goal is to keep our community informed and help support our membership initiatives.

Thank You to Our Donors

TBC is extremely grateful to those individuals who made donations in addition to dues to help meet our annual budget needs. These donations help TBC provide quality religious, social justice, educational and communal programming and ensure TBC's sustainability. The following individuals made contributions to TBC from July 1, 2020 through April 30, 2021.

Lori and David Abraham
Moses and Jane Alexander

Stacy and Marc Barenberg
Tara Kates & James Beckman
Doris and Lew Bender
Mark & Michele Bennett
Rudy Escalante & Diane Berenbaum
Jeremy Rabinowitz & Allison Berger
Janice Berger
Brooke Zykan Bernstein
Marc Mellon & Babette Bloch
Barbara and Richard Bloom
Nathan Blumberg
Victor Borden
Zelda Brenner
Diane and Don Brown
Beth and Scott Brown
Ken Brown
Iris Busch

Simon Curtis & Kiki Cahn
Debra and Dennis Case
Lisa and Robert Cederbaum
Beth Blumenthal & Ronald Corwin
Mr. and Mrs. Kim Cuniberti

Jonathan Gordon & Cortney Davis
Jeffrey Busch & Stephen Davis
Barbara Dobbin

Susan and Mitchell Farber
Senia Feiner
Hilary and David Felton
Mr. and Mrs. Ron Frei
David Fried
Tamir Friedman
Jocelyn Futado

Nancy Gade
Jeanne and Lloyd Goldberg
Kathy and Todd Gordon
Lynn and David Greenberg
Mr. Corey Greenberg
Betty and Lou Grey
Dina and Sam Gumins

Sue and Richard Hagan
Bonnie Heft
Caroline and Kevin Hoffman
Susan and Aaron Hollander

Sunil and Jason Katz
Randie Katz
Ilene and Paul Kauffman
Thomas Dubin & Pamela Klem
Mr. and Mrs. Allen Kopfstein
Suzanne and Harvey Kramer

Alice Learman
Joni and Richard Lerner
Dina and David Levi
Allen Levy
Beth and David Lewson
Anita Lindsey
David Schwartz & Deborah List

June Mara
Heidi and Brad Marcus
Patti and Alan Masarek
Ria and Bruce Miller

Wendy and Mac Nadel
Alyssa Newman
Ms. Laurie Noe

Gladys and Jerry O'Neil
James Ostendorf

Ann Paul
Beverly Peterman
Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Pfeffer

Sandi and Russ Prince

Caitlin Read

Amanda Robbins

David Rolle

Joe Kropf & Irene Rosenberg

Russell Robbins & Valerie Rosenson

Ronnie Ross

Jill & Ira Rothstein

Nan and Richard Ruben

Jennifer and Steven Rubin

Conor Rubin

Michele and Evan Rudnicki

Maor Sauler & Robyn Scatena

Gregg Feldman & Lynn Schlesinger

Michele and Judson Scruton

Mr. and Mrs. Barry Seigerman

Sun and Scott Semel

Marlene Serby

Louise and Erv Shames

Mark Silverman

Sharon and Ken Sobel

Cantor Jon Sobel

Rachel and Joe Sondheimer

Jennifer and Alan Spirer

Karen and Ross Tartell

Michael Tartell

Caroline Teichman

Sandy Tepper

Terry and Marty Ullman

Mrs. Marilyn Van Raalte

Sheila and Gary Wakoff

Melinda and Don Weber

Meryll and Michael Wolfman

Charles Landau & Kimberly Yonkers

Joan and Steve Yurman

Peggy and Steven Zamore