

Presidents Remarks

TBC Annual Congregational Meeting – May 27, 2021

Good evening everyone. It is wonderful to see you all – even on Zoom – and we appreciate your being here to participate in planning for TBC's future growth and sustainability.

Before we begin, I'm going to ask you to please type your name in the Chat, so we have an attendance list. Thank you.

After you've done that, please take a few minutes to consider the following:

- Given the challenges of the last year what, in your opinion, has been the greatest plus for you and briefly put that in the Chat.
- What have you missed most this past year and briefly put that in the Chat.

As you're doing this, I want to frame my message by playing a brief video by Dr. Ron Wolfson speaking to a congregation in CA. Dr. Wolfson is the Fingerhut Professor of Education at American Jewish University and president of the Kripke Institute. He also visits synagogues as a scholar-in-residence, and has written several books.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7cr43S0qE0w&t=158s>

This has certainly been an extraordinary year. Last year, as we were trying to put a proposed budget together and get ready for our annual meeting, there was so much uncertainty about what the year would bring and how we would get through it. We were not only dealing with COVID, but also an entirely new clergy model and a new cantor who would be our only clergy member and the director of our school.

In spite of those challenges we have had many successes. Our membership levels were a bit higher than projected, our first ever virtual High Holy Days and ongoing Shabbat services have had strong participation, we had robust virtual programming throughout the year, Religious School – with a new curriculum designed for virtual learning – was tremendously well-received and we even managed to have several in-person events in our parking lot. And we have started to have in person Shabbat services in our beautiful courtyard.

We were finally able to launch our virtual art sale, which is our major fundraiser for the year. Some art was sold before the website went live. The total gross amount we've raised so far is only \$8,580. The sale is live through May 31st and we will be reducing the prices on some pieces. So please visit the site. There are some beautiful pieces of art available. If you would like to see a piece in person, let me know and I will arrange to meet you at TBC. Please share the

link for the art sale with friends and family as well. For pieces that do not sell, we are planning a wine and cheese reception with an in-person silent auction at TBC toward the end of August.

We are now in the process of reviewing how TBC is responding to today's Jewish community, a community that is very different than it was 20 or 30 years ago.

Which is what prompted the survey that we recently distributed to everyone. It is an exciting and critically important initiative, but we need as many people as possible to respond so we have a true reflection of the congregations' thoughts and opinions. If you haven't completed the survey, I urge you to do so. The survey will be available until June 8th. Your input will help guide our direction as we work our way through the coming years.

Obviously, we don't have it all mapped out yet but we have begun work on a number of initiatives. Our number one priority for the coming year is expanding our community and attracting new people to TBC. We've assembled a full committee of people that will be led by Susan Farber to energize this focus moving forward. Kiki has single handedly managed this role over the last several years. Thank you Kiki for this and all that you do for TBC. With the influx of new families to the area over the last several months, we are optimistic about the opportunities that exist. We have had many more inquiries recently and several prospective families with school-age children who are ready to join.

The Cantor will talk about the school in her remarks. What I will say here is that we are rebuilding and re-energizing our school to help us attract young families. Our new part-time Assistant Director of Education and Youth Coordinator, Elie Gluck, will work with the Cantor to build a strong Jewish values-based program and develop a youth program.

We will also be working to significantly improve our social media and online presence. So far, we have one proposal from a social media consultant and are waiting on two additional proposals to understand how to best use social media.

We are actively seeking out the best opportunities to advertise in a variety of local media outlets. We expect to advertise over the next 8 to 10 weeks to increase our overall visibility leading up to the High Holy Days and the beginning of school.

The reopening task force is meeting in the next few weeks to discuss a full reopening. Barring anything unforeseen, we are planning in person High Holy Days, with a virtual option for anyone preferring to worship remotely.

There will be more – exactly what will depend on what you tell us in the survey. When I spoke to our URJ rep a few weeks ago, she called it “building the bridge as we cross it.”

Overall, we are stronger and we are moving in an exciting, new direction as Cantor Harriet will share with us now.