

Temple Emanuel

5775/5776 2015/2016



ANNUAL REPORT

A Sanctuary of Hope and Strength



Av, 5776—August, 2016

Dear Friends:

In this turbulent time, Temple Emanuel strives to be a sanctuary. What does a sanctuary look like? Consider one vignette.

If you have been to Shabbat Alive!, you know that at the end of the service there is a small, committed core of young drummers, 3 to 5 years old, who walk up to our drummer and assist by circling his drum and pounding away through the last prayers and songs. They have a song in their hearts, a gleam in their eyes, a smile on their faces, a joy that lifts us all. They do this every week.

One week the mother of one of our star drummers called Elias from the road. They were in the Longwood Medical area on a Friday afternoon at 5:00, stuck in traffic. It looks like we are not going to be able to make it this week. See you next week.

Shortly after the service begins, our little drummer and his parents enter the Rabbi Samuel Chiel Sanctuary and sit in their usual seats. At the end of the service, the little drummer joins the cadre of budding musicians around the drum. When the service is over, Elias asks the mother: What happened? I thought you could not make it this week. The mother replied: When our son heard that we were not coming, he carried on and threw a fit and would not stop until we got here. Shabbat Alive! is how we end our week, and how we begin Shabbat. Without it, something is missing.

Out of the mouths of babes. What this 4-year old intuited is broadly true for so many of us in different ways. Our beloved shul provides the places and spaces and rituals that add sanctuary and serenity, comfort and consistency, to all of our members, in all ages and stages. We provide that sanctuary 365 days a year. But we can only do so because of our Annual Appeal, which is the linchpin of our financial health, providing us with 25% of the revenue for our annual budget.

A sanctuary in the storm does not just happen. It has to be sustained. Your generosity does just that, keeping our sanctuary alive.

We all need a sanctuary, especially now. In this new year, may we all find hope, strength, and inspiration in our spiritual home. Thank you for your continued generosity which makes our sanctuary possible.

Shana tovah u'metukah,

Wes Gardenswartz

Rabbi Wes Gardenswartz

Stuart Cole

Stuart Cole, President

The background of the document is a photograph of a modern building with a complex, geometric facade. The building's structure is composed of various angles and planes, creating a dynamic pattern of light and shadow. Overlaid on this image are several semi-transparent, colorful squares in shades of purple, blue, orange, and green, which add a contemporary, artistic feel to the design. The text is centered within a white rectangular area that also has a slight transparency, allowing the building's details to be visible behind it.

Temple Emanuel Mission Statement

Temple Emanuel is a warm, welcoming, diverse Conservative congregation that:

- Inspires our members to a love of God, Torah and Israel;
- Builds lasting relationships that provide each of us with strength and support in life's hard times, shared joy in life's good times, and friendship at all times;
- Transmits a love of Jewish living from generation to generation; and
- Helps our members make ordinary days holy by filling our lives with the *mitzvot* God has given us to make our lives matter.

In pursuing these sacred purposes, Temple Emanuel offers the best of big and small: the resources that allow for choices, and the communities of shared passion that allow for intimacy.



The Gate of Torah

How does the Gate of Torah provide a sanctuary?

By putting us in touch with wisdom that is ancient and time-tested—and fresh and relevant at the same time.

By connecting us to the character of the Jewish people, wrestling, resilient, ever hopeful.

By building relationships among members of our temple and citizens of our land who, in a polarized world, where listening does not happen enough, learn to listen to one another.

By teaching us a new way to engage. Not “don’t you see what I see?” But, “what do I not see that you *do* see?”

A Sanctuary of Hope and Strength



The Gate of Prayer

How does the Gate of Prayer provide a sanctuary?

When we ask God for courage and strength, God says yes.

We find strength from one another, fellow seekers, fellow mourners, fellow celebrants, all lifting up and sanctifying our day—together.

A regular prayer life gives us anchoring and centering, heightening our awareness of the infinite blessing that is every day of our lives, if only we can see it. The day on which we pray is the day we do not take for granted.

A Sanctuary of Hope and Strength



The Gate of Israel

How does the Gate of Israel provide a sanctuary?

Israel daily confronts serious and seemingly intractable problems. Iran. Hezbollah. Hamas. The lack of a peace partner. A year of tragic and heartbreaking loss and violence. Internal challenges. A burgeoning *charedi* population that for the most part does not serve in the IDF. A Chief Rabbinate that controls Judaism in the public sphere, to the detriment of Judaism and the Jewish people.

And yet, despite its real challenges, if you go to Israel, and if you have the privilege of spending time with Israelis, you see a national character that is a marvel: hopeful, happy, strong, life-affirming, forward-looking.

When we look at our troubled world and wonder what will be, go to Israel: there is nothing like a booster shot of Israeli resilience.



A Sanctuary of Hope and Strength



The Gate of Shabbat

How does the Gate of Shabbat provide a sanctuary?

How often are you tethered to your smart phone? How many times a week are you doing something else when your phone rings, buzzes, beeps, pings, and the moment is gone?

It takes a lot of work to create a space of rest: no bills, no laundry, no errands, no distractions, no deliverables.

It takes Shabbat. We renew our humanity: deepening the relationships and the activities that make us who we are.



A Sanctuary of Hope and Strength



The Gate of Redeeming Our World

How does the Gate of Redeeming Our World provide a sanctuary?

When the hard news of the day makes us wonder, what can we do?

When the hard politics of the day makes us wonder, are we one nation?

When the looming problems of the day make us retreat.

The Gate of Redeeming Our World teaches us that the world is redeemable, slowly, gently, one person, one act, one bridge, one relationship, one gesture of hope, one gift of grace, at a time.



A Sanctuary of Hope and Strength



The Gate of Community

How does the Gate of Community provide a sanctuary?

When you face loneliness, long days, endless nights, an empty house, heavy hours, we are here with friendship and light, song and learning, coffee and conversation.

When you see echo chambers, people only talking to people with whom they already agree, we are a space where people of different politics, different economics, different ages and stages, come together, sing together, learn together, comfort together, celebrate together, do life together.

When the public square all too often features polarization and conflict, our own conversation is shaped by pluralism and mutual respect.

A Sanctuary of Hope and Strength



The Gate of Teaching Jewish Values to Our Children

How does the Gate of Teaching Jewish Values to Our Children provide a sanctuary?

On a late January Sunday afternoon, in the dead of winter, Adelson Community Hall is alive as our children and grandchildren star in *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Our children and grandchildren take us to a place of deep joy.

Our youngest learners, in our preschool, dip their apples in honey, light their Hanukkah candles, wave their lulav and etrog all around, make *charoset* for their Passover seders—and savor being Shabbat boy or girl with fresh challah and proud parents.

Our religious school and Makor students learn a love of Israel and Hebrew, of Jewish song and prayer, of Jewish history and ethics.

Our hearts are warmed as our youngest members run onto the bimah on Shabbat morning.



A Sanctuary of Hope and Strength



No Such Thing as a Sleepy Shabbat Morning

On one July Shabbat morning, in the middle of the summer, a magical moment happened. It was the Shabbat after five police officers were shot and killed in Dallas. We were about to recite the prayer for our country. One of our Shabbat morning regulars came up with a great idea. Outside on Ward Street, guarding us, was a Newton police officer, dressed in blue. What about inviting him to lead the prayer for our country?

We invited the officer to come into our Rabbi Samuel Chiel Sanctuary and lead us in reading a prayer for our country. As he left, everyone in attendance stood, as a gesture of respect and gratitude. No one who was there will forget that moment.

That is what a sanctuary does. It brings people together. It brings out the best in people. It allows us to glimpse, and for a halcyon moment to hold onto, a world more perfect.

A sanctuary needs resources to run. That is why our Annual Appeal is critically important.

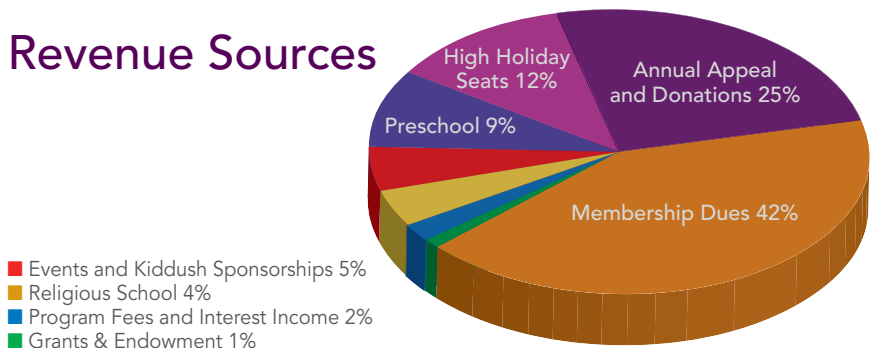
As the pie chart shows, our Annual Appeal is the linchpin of our budget, comprising 25% of our revenue. Dues, seats and school tuitions alone cannot sustain all that we do, particularly because we offer abatements to members who cannot pay full dues and rely on our financial assistance.

After membership dues, our Annual Appeal and Donations are our single greatest source of revenue—and the slice of the pie with the greatest capacity to grow.

We need a sacred space that brings people together, that brings out the best in people, and that offers us a glimpse of a world more perfect. That means we need our Annual Appeal. We are not who we are, and we cannot do what we do, without it.

Thank you for your prodigious generosity. Last year was the most successful Annual Appeal in our shul's 81-year history. Thank you for making our shul into the sanctuary that we all need, always, and especially now.

Revenue Sources



Our Annual Appeal and Donations comprise 25% of all of our revenue. Your gift directly translates into our ability to sustain our vibrant community and offer a sanctuary of hope and strength.

Justice and Righteousness

What is the mission of the Jewish people, and when did we get it?

We got our mission in a very dispiriting time. The people of Sodom and Gomorrah were doing something that mightily displeased God, who was determined to wipe them out for their sinfulness.

In this hard, discouraging landscape, God lays out our mission—doing justice and righteousness:

For I have singled Abraham out, that he may instruct his children and his posterity to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is just and right. (Gen. 18:19)

As Donniel Hartman, President of the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem, has observed, this verse means that if we are descendants of Abraham, if we are part of the Jewish conversation and the Jewish project, that means necessarily doing justice and righteousness, *tzedakah u'mishpat*.

Our Torah reminds us that we respond to anxious times by deepening our commitment to work to make a better world, as Abraham did in negotiating with God to save the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

We live in anxious times. But being a descendant of Abraham means that we respond to the strife and conflict of a long and bitter political season; continued racial unrest and conflict between law enforcement and communities of color; continued terrorist threats at home, in Israel and abroad; continued economic struggle for a vanished middle class. We respond to all of that by doing justice and righteousness.

Our Seven Gates are seven different ways into doing justice and righteousness. So much good happens every day within those Seven Gates that uplifts members of our community and the broader Jewish and non-Jewish community. As one small example, our partner, Mass Avenue Baptist Church in Cambridge, this year named its social hall for Temple Emanuel in honor of our 27 year partnership in supporting their soup kitchen that feeds the hungry.

Thank you for giving us the resources we need, in each of our Seven Gates, to respond to the pain and edge of our world not by lamenting, or by withdrawing, or by becoming cynical, or by becoming apathetic, but by doing the uplifting work of justice and righteousness. Your gift allows us to be a shul for all, including our members who cannot pay our full dues, so that all of us can have an impact on the world and be uplifted by the good we do.

In the pages that follow, we thank each of you by name for your generosity which makes our good works possible.



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