

2702 Arbor Drive, Madison, Wisconsin 608-238-3123 | tbemadison.org



VISION STATEMENT

Our Vision is to create and sustain a vibrant, inclusive, and engaged community that welcomes and connects people from all walks of Reform Jewish life, and fulfills their spiritual, educational, ethical, social, and emotional needs and expectations.

- Adopted in 2014



ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER Steve Lipton, President

OPENING PRAYER Rabbi Jonathan Biatch

INTRODUCTION OF STAFF
Stefanie Kushner, Executive Director

APPROVAL OF 2020 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES Leslie Coff, Second Vice President

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT Rozan Anderson, Immediate Past President, Chair

INSTALLATION OF TRUSTEES
Rabbi Jonathan Biatch and Cantor Jacob Niemi

REOPENING PANEL Leslie Coff, Alan Schwartzstein, Rabbi Biatch, Nicole Jahr, and Stefanie Kushner

> PRESIDENT'S REPORT Steve Lipton, President

OTHER BUSINESS / Q&A Leslie Coff, Second Vice President

ADJOURN TO BREAKOUT ROOMS



TBE ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES JUNE 7, 2020

- I. Call to Order—Steve Lipton, President
- II. Opening Prayer—Rabbi Jonathan Biatch
 Psalm 150: Let everything that has breath, praise
 God. Take three breaths, in and out. Intentional
 breathing helps us nourish our bodies, slow ourselves
 down, and learn our place in the world. It
 helps us to offer gratitude, for the gift of life and
 community. Our intentional breathing helps us
 better decide how to spend each moment of our
 lives on this planet. Let us not squander our gifts
 of life and creativity in this community. Let us remember our mutual obligation to participate in
 this community in a respectful and peaceful way.
 I offer this bracha, Shehecheyanu, as we begin a
 new year together.
- III. Introduction of Staff—Stefanie Kushner, Executive Director
 - Rabbi Jonathan Biatch, Cantor Jacob Niemi, Executive Director Stefanie Kushner, Associate Executive Director Kendra Sager, Director of Community Engagement Aleeza Hoffert, Director of Lifelong Learning Nicole Jahr, Facilities Coordinator Steve Gregorius, Melissa Osborne, Kim Rosenthal, Brianna Sohrweide, Mona Statz, and others
 - Stefanie recalls in this year the low point of losing Sue Knudson in the middle of the year. Her wish was to work until the last day she could, and we're proud that we could accommodate Sue this request. The greatest high of the year was welcoming Cantor Niemi to our congregation last July. His leadership, thoughtfulness, and musical talents have brought much joy to our membership. We also welcome Melissa Osborne and Kim Rosenthal to administrative staff. We wish Thomas Mackey (facilities) good luck in his move to Hillel. Johanna Golden is our new MaTTY advisor. Stefanie also appreciates all the staff and faculty who are continuing to support her in this, her first year as executive director.
- IV. Approval of 2019 Annual Meeting Minutes Marc motioned to pass, Molly seconded, approved without discussion
- V. Treasurer's Report—Stefanie Kushner (Boris Nenide) Membership revenue has exceeded fundraising budget amounts and membership contributions

due to requested additional 10% in membership renewal. Due to building closings with COVID-19 and other factors, costs have gone down. Endowments are in healthy reserve, all of which helps with the uncertainty of Fiscal Year 2021.

- VI. Nominating Committee Report— Rozan Anderson
 - We have kept most of our current officers who had a one-year term last year and will be nominated into a 2-year term.
 - The Financial Secretary position will merge with Treasurer.
 - We honor our retiring trustees: Allyn Bress, Nancy Brower, Molly Fields, and Sherie Sondel.
 - Allyn suggested printed biographies of Board members. Steve indicated that we could not approve of the Board slate via technology, hence paper balloting this year. Over 50 affirmative votes were received, approving the slate.
- VII. Installation of Trustees—Rabbi Biatch and Cantor Niemi

Source of all Being, may the children of this community learn these passions from us: Love of Torah, devotion in prayer, and support of community. May we guide with integrity, and may our leadership be in your service. May those who teach and nourish us be blessed with satisfaction, and may we appreciate their time and devotion. Bless us with the fruits of wisdom and understanding, and may our efforts bring fulfillment and joy. Praised are you, Adonai, to whom we serve in awe and devotion. Oh, Holy One, bestow your blessing onto these leaders who have elected to serve our congregation. May they fulfill their mandate to lead and support our synagogue with a whole heart. Bestow in them insight as well as understanding, perseverance as well as patience, honor and diligence, to identify with the needs and desires of our members. Inspire them to work together in pursuit of our community's greatest aspirations, even as they serve as stewards to our synagogue's daily needs.

Oh God, we are grateful for the dedication and giving spirit of the leaders before us. They are prepared to devote their energies to your service. Help them to lead us in the pursuit of our sacred mission. We grant you to serve as members of the Board of Trustees.



TBE ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES JUNE 7, 2020

- VIII. Rabbi & Cantor engaged in the Priestly Benediction for members of the Board.
- IX. President's Report—Steve Lipton
 Thank you to our outgoing board members; thank
 you isn't enough. Your work and action was above
 and beyond expectation. Boris and Jane will leave
 their financial positions and we're grateful they will
 continue on as members of the board. Welcome to
 MaTTY President Esther Kassel and many thanks to
 outgoing President Jack Maloney.

Last year was a wonderful year at TBE; it was a year of engagement and activity. The annual report indicates this. Looking forward, it is time to embrace a new normal. I am proud of our community as COVID-19 enveloped us. Staff and clergy stepped up to the challenge with even increased engagement. While Steve was overnight at the hospital this week he learned Cantor Jacob's reputation at the hospital as an admired pastoral member.

Service attendance has increased over zoom during our time of quarantine. We still get together, celebrate, and learn. New challenges continue with riots against systemic racism. We Jews understand this in deeper ways and are committed to this social action. As a community, we can be proud of the stand we are taking to embrace our values and actions. While we are sad that we are not together, this situation is not forever. We will continue to create community and fight for justice and equity. We will innovate in worship and community growth. We are going to shine through this time. We will keep going.

X. Plan to Open TBE and the Implications for Worship— Stefanie Kushner and Rabbi Biatch

Stefanie: Staying Safe in Changing Times Task Force includes executive staff and Nancy Brower, Leslie Coff, Bary Gidal, Susanna Goldberg, Julia Katz, Alan Schwartzstein, Casey Becker, and David Bookstaff. They meet weekly to analyze current data and information regarding ways to continue Temple activity and programming in order to be safe with COVID-19. The task force can only work about two weeks in advance due to constant changes. The building is closed to congregants but open to interested staff. Safety measure procedures are in place

for those who enter the building. Understanding that we all want to reenter the building, this will happen at some point but not until it is completely safe.

Rabbi: Regarding worship, our first Zoom Shabbat service was in the Men's Club Shabbat service in March. Then Rabbi & Cantor broadcasted from Temple without congregants, and then moved to their own homes to broadcast to the congregation from there. This involved a tech learning curve that is still in place. Nicole Jahr often serves as platform administrator. There are often a significant number of people viewing services live, and many more viewing in recording at a later time. There are even viewers who are not members of TBE and live farther away. Outreach has become a welcome side asset to quarantine.

Up to 25% capacity in houses of worship is currently allowed, and this current information drives predictions regarding High Holy Days. Concerns include singing in worship. We hope to create hybrid experiences, combining video and in-person meeting ahead of High Holy Days in order to experiment and achieve best practices for worship. A survey will be coming to educate on clergy's thoughts and receive data of comfort levels regarding elements of High Holy Day worship.

- XI. Unfinished and New Business—Steve Lipton The following decisions have been passed:
 - Bylaws changes are related to allowing electronic meeting and voting for Board and various activities.
 - Language regarding committees has also been cleaned up.
 - Financial Secretary position has merged to Treasurer position.
 - The Rabbi's contract has been renewed, and we are all grateful for that.
 - In the passing of Lottie Frank and Gary Friedman, Temple Beth El has lost a wealth of kindness and guidance. They will be sorely missed, but we are also thankful for the legacy of leadership among the executive staff and trustees they left behind.
- XII. Question & Answer Panel—Stefanie Kushner, Steve Lipton, & Rabbi Biatch
 - Carole Kantor appreciates the Torah study facilitation and tech support, which is in large part due to congregation volunteerism.



TBE ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES JUNE 7, 2020

- Niles Berman appreciates the Zoom version of The Accidental Minyan. The variety of lay leadership and musical participation is full, and a wonderful experience.
- Allyn Bress thanks Temple leadership during this time as we strive to help everyone to feel equal.
 This is not just for this moment, but will be an ongoing challenge for all. Many thanks to Rabbi and the Social Action Committee.
- Joanna Berke asked if the new slate is available online, and it is under the membership section on the TBE website.
- Marc Herstand asked about outdoor services this summer. Rabbi indicated that it will be discussed with the Task Force this week. This past Shabbat was Outdoor Shabbat online. These decisions will be determined and supported by the Task Force. The Cantor commented about the large amount of data on the virus the Task Force is working through to make the safest decisions regarding outdoor worship and activities.
- Jean asked about getting onto Facebook in order to access worship. Congregants do not need an account, but need to access the URL link in order to reach the service. Stefanie will update that information, especially with the link to this access via the Temple website.
- Alice Kavanaugh would like meeting platform links to be available via ShulCloud. Kendra said all links are on Weekly Happenings email.
- Merilyn Price asked about purchasing the prayer

- book. CCAR website makes *Mishkan T'filah* available for purchase. Cantor says the siddur is also available on Kindle. It is also available online, and other "tips & tricks" to access siddurim may be available.
- David Seligman asked about exchange of information across organizations; Stefanie and Rabbi both confirmed the large number of webinars and opportunities to troubleshoot, collaborate, and develop best practices.
- Martin Megeff asked how we're doing regarding membership. Stefanie indicated that we have 583 member families and are strong in that regard. Nicole is working on the school program, will compare to MMSD determinations. Will consider utilizing madrichim as one-to-one tutors, combining in-building, online teaching, or combination for teaching and learning.

XIII. Steve proposed to adjourn

XIV. Molly motions, Allyn seconds, meeting adjourned at 4:15 pm

Respectfully submitted by Michelle Gustafson



Why isn't there financial information in the annual report?

Over the last few months we have been transitioning our bookkeeping. The benefits of this transition include:

- Easier access to financial information for staff that need access.
- Outsourcing our payroll and moving the bookkeeping responsibilities to Stefanie Kushner and Melissa Osborne, eliminating the need for an accounting professional.
- Upgrading our technology so leaders can more easily be involved in financial decisions.

This transition will not incur any additional cost as the additional software expense is offset by the decrease in personnel expense.

This is a large transition that requires time to make sure all data are accurate. To continue to be transparent with our financial information, we will publish a financial addendum to this annual report this summer. Thank you for your patience.



SLATE FOR THE 2021–2022 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Officers:

President: Steve Lipton
President Elect: Leslie Coff
First Vice President: Leslie Coff
Second Vice President: Marta Karlov
Treasurer: Carly Jacobson

Recording Secretary: Michelle Gustafson Immediate Past President: Rozan Anderson Men's Club President: Marc Herstand

Sisterhood Co-Presidents: Casey Becker and Rachel Leader

Trustees nominated for a two-year term:

Laurie Borkon Gwen Jacobsohn Marty Megeff Roger Wolkoff

Trustees continuing in the middle of a first term:

Karin Horler Julia Katz Dorothy Paler Linda Reivitz Jane Tayes

Trustees nominated for a second two-year term:

Howard Erlanger Susanna Goldberg

Trustees continuing in the middle of a second term:

David Bookstaff Dale Kaufman Suzanne Wolf

Trustee to be elected for a one-year term:

MaTTY President: Kate Mitchell (elected by MaTTY)

2019–21 Retiring Trustees:

Laura Lang James Mackman Boris Nenide

Respectfully submitted by the 2021 Nominating Committee:

Rozan Anderson, Chair Leslie Coff Susanna Goldberg Amy Krauthamer-Maloney Kendra Sager, ex-officio



Executive Director Stefanie Kushner

I am excited to start this annual report in a much better place than we were this time last year. After spending the year focusing on engaging people from afar, we are now planning on adding opportunities to see people in person. These last 15 months were long and hard both emotionally and psychologically. As our leaders and staff have said, but it bears repeating, we were successful in our resiliency, and working together we continued to engage spiritually, educationally, and socially. I am so grateful to work with the TBE staff that prioritized our community's welfare and creatively found ways to continue our mission in ways that were new and challenging.

During this year we successfully implemented our Temple Community Contribution program. This program is based on our four foundational stones—beit knesset (house of community), beit t'filah (house of worship), beit midrash (house of learning), and beit tzedek (house of justice)—that support our synagogue life and bind us together as Jews. These foundations are the basis for our membership contribution structure but also for how we came together this year as a community in these challenging times.

While we worked on virtual programming, we also took this time to reflect on how we could evaluate our new circumstances and improve our processes. Thank you to all that helped in the many task forces that were created this year: Staying Safe in Changing Times, Making the Building Healthier To Return To, and the Financial Task Force. In addition to these new task forces, the Development and Trust committees continue to evaluate and make changes to ensure the financial health of Temple Beth El. Our Special Events Committee planned events to make sure we had fun, bringing Trivia Night and the Great Virtual Scavenger Hunt online, and hundreds of members and their families joined in!

We are so thankful to several generous donor families, TBE Sisterhood and Men's Club, and the Goodman Foundation for giving us the financial support we needed to renovate our sanctuary. This renovation includes replacing pews with chairs, upgrading our A/V to enhance the experience for those in the space and those that remain at home, installing an ADA-compliant automatic door on our all-gender restroom, and installing an assisted listening device system in our sanctuary, Swarsensky Social Hall, and Weinstein Community Court. We not only upgraded our functionality and inclusivity but are enhancing the space to make it more beautiful to come back to.

We made administrative changes to upgrade our technology to bring us up to date. The changes to our accounting system will allow us to be more efficient and transparent as well as allow more oversight from leadership. Our staff learned many new technologies that have improved our virtual programming and enabled us to work together remotely. This has increased our productivity and gave us the flexibility to work outside of the TBE office.

What will the next year bring? It is a question we are now asking. We are looking at the ways we can safely come back in person while still welcoming those from home. Our community circle has expanded with the use of technology, and we will continue to welcome everyone no matter how they connect with us. The staff is excited, and truthfully, nervous, about how to program for this next year to engage these two audiences. We are ready for the challenge and know that with the help of TBE leadership and patience from everyone, we will have a wonderful year welcoming everyone in whatever space they choose.



ADMINISTRATION



Clergy and Staff

Rabbi Jonathan Biatch, MAHL, DD Cantor Jacob Niemi, MSM **Executive Director** Stefanie Kushner Director of Lifelong Learning Nicole A. Jahr, RJE Associate Executive Director Kendra Sager, RJE Facilities Coordinator Steven Gregorius Program Coordinator Aleeza Hoffert Office & Financial Coordinator Melissa Osborne Lifelong Learning Coordinator Kathleen O'Connell MaTTY Advisor Katie Parrish **MuTTY Advisor** Dan Maloney JEWniors Advisor and URJ Camp Intern Allison Wexler **Communications Assistant Sara Popkewitz** Communications Assistant Brianna Sohrweide Facilities Support Staff Mona Statz Cantor Emerita Deborah Martin

\$180,000 PPP LOAN WAS 100% FORGIVEN

17%
INCREASE OF TEMPLE
COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS
FOR MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS
RECEIVED BY
JANUARY 1, 2021

6 FULL-TIME STAFF

8
PART-TIME STAFF



Engagement Committee Steve LaBelle and David Gundersen, Co-Chairs

Sparks of Inspiration

In lieu of Shabbat Honoring Our Seniors, our volunteers planned Sparks of Inspiration, held over Zoom in August, which was developed to help all of us momentarily escape possible loneliness and social isolation. We virtually brought together senior members of our congregation to share the joy and inspiration they find in their life experiences. Participants shared stories, poems, and their history to convey meaningful moments and what makes them happy and fulfilled. The ensuing discussions were very lively and enjoyable. Plans for another version of this event are in the works for summer.

Hanukkah

TBE put together a wonderful array of virtual Hanukkah activities throughout the holiday, including virtual candle lightings by various congregants; singing by Cantor Niemi; holiday cooking with Quarantine Kitchen; MJND, MaTTY, and MuTTY activities; and access to the World Union for

Progressive Judaism Hanukkah Gala. We also put together a wonderful resource guide, Hanukkah@Home, a primer on the holiday, which included topics such as candle choreography, readings, blessings, stories, inspirations, recipes, songs, trivia, and activities. It was very well received, and we will continue to share it for Hanukkah this year. Zoom candle lightings will also return this year.

Havdalah Honoring Our Volunteers

TBE held a virtual Havdalah honoring our volunteers in April, a variation on the usual annual service we normally hold to recognize these individuals. Although virtual, the Temple invited the participants to join in with their own Havdalah offerings, and many volunteers who were honored submitted their own thoughts or notes on their motivation for volunteering. Three individuals, Ellie Silver (emerging leader), Karin Horler (volunteer of the year), and Dan Esser (lifetime achievement), were specifically recognized for their valuable contributions to TBE.





Member Milestones

As an outgrowth of the Sparks of Inspiration program, TBE has begun a project to honor the longevity of membership of our members. We are paying special attention to those who have been members for 54+ years by gathering some of their personal Temple history, stories, and memories through questionnaires and interviews. We plan to share some of these stories starting in December and leading up to Shabbat Honoring Our Members in February.

Pride

Our Pride planning team had their first meeting in March and created a series of speakers and programs during the month of June in four areas: text, history, advocacy, and creativity.

 Cantor Niemi's text study follows up on the session he led last year that still gets rave reviews and was requested to return by many members of the planning team.

- Pride Shabbat on June 11 features guest speaker Richard Wagner, author of two recent books Wisconsin's LGBTQ+ history.
- Quarantine Kitchen brings back an encore showing of Jen Szlasa's rainbow challah demonstration.
- An advocacy program with Brian Juchems, coexecutive director of GSAFE, gives us a look at the issues facing LGBTQ+ students in our schools and communities.
- A fast-paced writing workshop by Rena Yehuda Newman gets everyone's Jewish creative juices flowing with writing prompt-based games for Pride month.







Young Families Sarah Sherman and Carly Jacobson, Co-Chairs

The young families have continued to hold regular events this year, adapting as needed. Last August, we had "Tot Shabbat in the Parking Lot," where families came together for an in-person, socially distanced Shabbat experience in the TBE parking lot. Throughout the winter we gathered on Zoom for a Havdalah and glow stick dance party, a young families Tu Bishvat seder, and PJ Library Tots and Tunes. The cantor led Jammin' in our Jammies, and Stephanie Kirklin planned and led a chocolate seder for us! We look forward to gathering in person again soon.







Membership Committee Suzanne Wolf, Chair

The Membership Committee welcomes new members throughout the year. Though this year has been unlike any in the past, we continued to reach out, to ensure new members were aware and able to access remote enrichment opportunities within our Temple Beth El community.

In February, our Shabbat reception honoring our new members via Zoom was well received. For many this was our first face-to-face Zoom get-together. This year TBE Membership Committee members delivered welcome bags to new members' homes. We will continue to work together with staff to develop programing to meet our members needs.

Thank you to committee members Molly Fields, Felyce Gilford, Susan Ottmann, and Linda Reivitz, along with staff members Kendra Sager and Melissa Osborne, for making our new members feel so welcomed at Temple Beth El.



Madison's Jews' Next Dor

Molly Fields and Ellie Silver, Co-Presidents

Between June 2020 and May 2021, MJND hosted Zoom Havdalah nearly every weekend. Each week was filled with lively conversation and creative activities, and on average we had 15 attendees. Activities ranged from an American Sign Language lesson to open mic nights, and Jackbox games to virtual show-and-tells.

This year, the MJND board received a grant from the Jewish Federation of Madison to host a Havdalah Learning Series. The four-week series took place in January and built on our weekly Havdalah Zooms. It included a deep dive into the Havdalah ceremony and featured guest speakers, including Rabbi Biatch, Cantor Niemi, and other rabbis in the Madison community. Our guests offered new thought-provoking perspectives to spark conversation. Thanks to the grant, participants received a Havdalah set to use during our weekly Havdalah Zooms.

MJND plans to continue to engage our community with less frequent Zoom Havdalahs and start to incorporate in-person events this summer and fall, including a paint night, kayaking, apple picking, and more.

In addition to transitioning back to in person events, the MJND board experienced some personnel changes this year. In January, Ashley Gordon stepped down as co-president of MJND, and the board unanimously voted Ellie Silver into the role. The board also unanimously voted Ari Carr (former member at large) into the secretary role, to fill Ellie's previous position. The board recruited llana Gang to join as the new member at large. In June, Ellie will be moving to Chicago and stepping down as co-president. Molly Fields will continue to act as MJND president.

With lots of exciting plans in the works, MJND will continue to provide safe and engaging experiences for our community.

Connect with MJND: Email: mjndtbe@gmail.com

Instagram: @MJND_TBE

Facebook Group (all events are advertised here): Madison's Jews' Next Dor (MJND)









Sisterhood Casey Becker and Rachel Leader, Co-Presidents

In 2020 Temple Beth El Sisterhood worked to continue to provide enriching experiences to keep us "together" even

provide enriching experiences to keep us "together" even though we couldn't be together, and give back to our Temple Beth El community. Some of the highlights from the last year include:

- Remembering our beloved Lottie Frank on the anniversary of her first yahrzeit.
- A year of engaging virtual programming that included a performance from the Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestra, the Sisterhood Kallah: Tikkun Olam and the Henry Vilas Zoo, and a conversation about food sustainability with chef Dave Heide.
- Innovative changes that allowed us to maintain traditions like our annual Sisterhood Shabbat, Food-A-Rama luncheon, and access to the Sisterhood-run Temple Beth El Judaica Shop with online shopping for Hanukkah.
- Giving back to our community and our congregation by providing financial support to community causes such as Second Harvest Foodbank, the Temple Beth El sanctuary renovation, and URJ summer camp scholarships.

Thank you to our Sisterhood members, executive board, allies, volunteers, and so many more who provided a bright light for our souls in 2020.

Temple Beth El FOOD - A - RAMA ELECTION DAY FOOD -A-RAMA - NOVEMBER 2020

Men's Club Marc Herstand, President

During the 2020–2021 program year, the Temple Beth El Men's Club continued to be active, albeit in a virtual manner due to COVID-19. In August the Men's Club held its annual retreat in a virtual format with Rabbi Jonathan Biatch and Cantor Jacob Niemi leading the discussions.

In October Men's Club members, with guidance and direction from Dan Esser, put up the annual sukkah.

In December the Men's Club cosponsored with Sisterhood a virtual presentation by Noah Ovshinsky of Wisconsin Public Radio.

Shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic, Rabbi Irvin Ehrlich had begun the ROMEO (Retired Old Men Eating Out) luncheon group. After this group was shut down because of the pandemic, Irvin reconvened the group in a virtual manner and continued these regular popular luncheon gatherings by Zoom.

In March the annual Men's Club Shabbat took place, in a virtual manner, organized by Sanford Carimi. Men's Club member Alan Schwartzstein presented the *d'var*, which he related to public health and its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Men's Club book group has continued reading and discussing current and fascinating fiction and nonfiction on a regular and virtual basis. The book group has been meeting for over 13 years and has engaged in close to 150 discussions during this time.

With the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, Men's Club members are starting to organize outdoor in-person activities including a golf outing, attendance at the Brewers' opening game, and ROMEO lunches on the patio of the Temple.





Communications Committee

Karin Horler, Chair

We appreciate the ongoing opportunity to help share the TBE story with members and prospective members. This past year has involved many changes as we continued to adjust to online programming and then prepare for reopening, while also working on new projects and initiatives unrelated to the pandemic.

A major project of the past year involved communicating the rollout of the Temple Community Contribution program, the new flexible membership contribution system that began last fall for the 2021 membership year. That process began in summer 2020 and continued through the membership renewal mailing and other communications in the fall.

Among other projects, we worked with the clergy on a series of email reflections leading up to the High Holy Days last summer and fall. We continued to edit biweekly Facebook engagement posts that began when in-person gatherings were paused last March. In the wake of the increased attention focused on racial justice this past year, we worked with the Social Action Committee to develop a process for adding the Racial Justice Action of the Week feature to the Weekly Happenings emails. Our ongoing work also includes strategy and editing of the Bulletin, weekly emails, event publicity, email newsletters, and more. The committee works closely with TBE staff on the many moving parts of our communications process, and we appreciate their ongoing dedication, teamwork, and creativity.

Nancy Brower continued to be an essential member of the committee after stepping down from the chair position

last June—a position she had held since the committee's inception. She also served as the communications representative on the Staying Safe in Changing Times task force and the membership team that instituted the Temple Community Contribution program. Among her other responsibilities, she works closely with Stefanie Kushner and the Development Committee on the Giving Spotlight email newsletter. I am incredibly thankful for her many contributions and her editorial wisdom.

Ellie Silver joined the committee last summer and immediately began to contribute her valuable suggestions, perspective, and enthusiasm. She launched our Instagram account (@tbemadison) with the primary goal of reaching unaffiliated young adults and has grown its following substantially. Ellie worked closely with Rabbi Biatch to create the Monday Minute series, in which the rabbi explores a variety of topics in short weekly videos.

Soon, Ellie will need to turn over the Instagram account to someone new after she moves to Chicago. Please email Kendra at associate@tbemadison.org—or send us an Instagram message—if you or someone in your family might be interested in helping with our Instagram account.

We welcomed Sara Popkewitz to the team as Communications Assistant.

Please share your feedback, questions, and interest with me (karinhorler@gmail.com) or Kendra (associate@tbemadison. org). We welcome your involvement and ideas!

568
MEMBER HOUSEHOLDS

16
NEW MEMBER FAMILIES THIS YEAR

48
EPISODES OF QUARANTINE KITCHEN

52
EPISODES OF BO'U NASHIR
(COME, LET US SING!)

136
INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS



Jonathan Biatch, MAHL, DD

Dear friends,

Shalom to you, at this extraordinary time in the life of our community. Having just spent the last fifteen months in isolation and quarantine; having just experienced more than a year of masking, tests, vaccines, and questioning; and having officiated at worship sitting in front of a green screen at my home: all these experiences have taught that nature can be a strong opponent, but that human resilience can overcome many obstacles.

Our community is one of optimism, hope, and hardiness, and—despite the boundaries of our onscreen experiences—we resolve to perpetuate Jewish life regardless of the challenges. I offer my gratitude to you for our mutual work in strengthening Jewish life together.

As I look back over the last 16 years—the time of my tenure as your rabbi—I note the tremendous spiritual and communal growth of our programs and services. This is due, in great measure, to the partnership, creativity, social justice passions, and wisdom of our leaders with their TBE staff and board. We have banded together for times of joy and sorrow, of defeat and uplift, and we have remained a community that time and again has demonstrated its resilience. I look forward to our continuing relationship together.



I would like to thank TBE member donors and the Goodman Foundation in their support of the special renovations of the sanctuary, the Swarsensky Social Hall, and the Weinstein Community Court. Those spaces are intended to be ready for opening in mid-summer, in time for the High Holy Days. The new design and electronic features will enable us to distance ourselves when necessary yet remain intimately in touch with our worship; stream our worship online; provide two kinds of congregations—online and in person—the mutual joy of worship and study; and enhance the aesthetic experience of our worship. We look forward to welcoming you back to the building to see our renewed worship and program spaces.

I also offer condolences to those in our community who experienced the loss of a loved one during this most difficult of years. Many of our members' extended family died as a result of COVID-19, especially as many were older and were already health compromised. May their memories be blessings to their families and to us all.

We continue to gain our strength from our four foundation stones that support us as Jews:

- We are a *beit knesset* (house of community), where we assemble in a community of common purpose and hope, and where we take refuge from the storms of life.
- We are a beit t'filah (house of worship), where we nurture our spiritual needs, invest ourselves in praise of the values that undergird our faith, and offer gratitude to God for the lives we cherish and the resources of our world.
- We are a beit midrash (house of study), where we learn from child to adult age—about our history, our culture, our very lifeblood.
- We are a beit tzedek (house of righteousness), wherein we put into practice the ethics that we learn from tradition: we move beyond ourselves and out into the world, identifying areas for improvement, creating programs or movements to address needed societal change, and implementing these programs to benefit the world.



BEIT T'FILAH—HOUSE OF WORSHIP

I am privileged to work with an extraordinarily engaged and concerned TBE staff who oversees our programs, our building, and our health and welfare, and there is nowhere a more creative and enthusiastic group of colleagues. So, let me elevate my colleagues on staff who do so much for this community even when it is most challenging.

We work with an astonishingly brilliant array of volunteers who give freely of their time and energies to promote Jewish life and values. Each of our members is a treasure to be honored and respected, and I am grateful for getting to know and love our supporters.

I am also honored to work with a Board of Trustees whose determination to secure the financial viability of TBE is unwavering. Our leaders spend many days and evenings in service to one another and to the community, and we are thankful for their contributions of time, energies, and substance.

Our president, Steve Lipton, has been an inspired and bold leader, and it is truly a pleasure to serve with him on our Executive and Leadership Teams. His long history as a member of TBE and his creative and visioning mind both support the progress of our synagogue. May the strength of his administration continue.

Further, I am fortunate to direct our congregation's Rabbi's Discretionary Fund, and in the year gone by I have made contributions to many causes: groups reflecting the Jewish value of tzedek, of righteousness, and of perpetuating Jewish life here, in Israel, and around the world; nonprofit organizations that serve Jews and non-Jews alike; groups that have responded to the COVID-19 relief effort; camp scholarships for our TBE students; the publication of a new Reform prayerbook for the Israeli Progressive movement; the USO and the Friends of the Israeli Defense Forces; clients of The Road Home who need unique assistance; and organizations such as the Southern Poverty Law Center, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Compassionate Choices, and Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice, as well as TBE programs that require financial help, other Jewish communal organizations that assist our community, and many individuals needing immediate financial need.

Despite the obstacles, we have had a successful year, especially with your support and guidance. May we all go from strength to strength as we continue bringing vibrant and meaningful Jewish life to Madison in the years to come.

42
WEEKS OF SAYING SHABBAT BLESSINGS
TOGETHER OVER ZOOM

125
PEAK LIVE VIEWERS OF HIGH HOLY DAY
SERVICES ON YOUTUBE

HIGH HOLY DAY EVENTS AND PROGRAMS
OFFERED ON ZOOM, FACEBOOK,
AND YOUTUBE

12
FUNERALS OFFICIATED BY OUR CLERGY

11 BABIES BORN IN OUR COMMUNITY

20B'NAI MITZVAH LIVESTREAMED TO FACEBOOK



BEIT T'FILAH—HOUSE OF WORSHIP

Cantor Jacob Niemi, MSM

I want to begin from a place of deep gratitude and appreciation, for my clergy partner, Rabbi Jonathan Biatch, and for all of the professional staff and Temple leadership. It is hard to fathom the totality of this year, and I could not imagine making it through such a challenging time without the supportive and collaborative environment that we strive to create at TBE. After two years of serving this community, over half of which has been shaped by the pandemic, I find myself extraordinarily proud of the way this community has navigated everything the past year has brought. Like our ancestors in the wilderness, we have encountered both dangers and miracles, and in the uniqueness of our time, we have found moments that were wonderful, strange, challenging, joyous, and holy...sometimes all at once.

Last summer brought us into some truly uncharted spaces, as members of our community responded to the racial reckoning in our country by engaging in deeply reflective inner work to process and grow and act, work that I and other leaders in our community encouraged and facilitated. And this inner work continued even as we prepared for the High Holy Days season, as the ideas of cheshbon hanefesh (accounting of one's soul) and t'shuvah (repentance) took on new and deeper meanings for many. With an incredible team of staff and leadership, we were able to prepare both practically and spiritually for the remarkable and necessary changes to the structure and content of our High Holy Day worship and programming.

Over the course of the year, it has been a privilege to work with everyone who strove to keep music and worship alive in our community, from Les Goldsmith continuing to join us for every Shabbat Midor Lador, to members of the choir going out of their technological comfort zones to make virtual choir

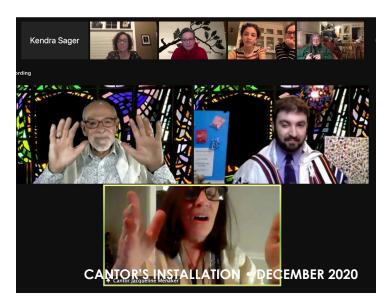
videos, to the song leaders on our Sunday music team taking on real leadership in our Religious School *t'filah* and music programming, to those who both led and participated in the Shabbat Morning Joyful Worship.

We have created so many sacred moments this year, finding innovative ways to celebrate holidays and life-cycle events, in all their joy and strangeness. In addition to facilitating many of these moments for members of our community, I was also fortunate to be on the receiving end, as this congregation overwhelmed me with the love and support expressed at my installation. It has also been an honor to engage with the community as a provider of pastoral care, especially in such a difficult year, to offer a comforting presence in times of sickness and loss, whether it was facilitating a support group, officiating a funeral or a shivah minyan, or visiting someone in the hospital. These moments, too, are sacred.

I have enjoyed continuing my weekly online song sessions, meeting with members of the choir online (and recently starting to meet in person), and I am consistently moved by the mutual support offered in these gatherings. This is also reflected in almost every other space where I am fortunate to interact with members of this community. I am grateful for all the ways that we have found to support one another, and to find meaning in these challenging times. If we continue to offer one another the same kind of gentleness and compassion that I have witnessed this last year, then I know that we will continue to grow and thrive in the year to come, whatever it may bring us.

My deepest thanks to the members and leaders of Temple Beth El. I look forward to continuing to serve as your cantor.







BEIT T'FILAH—HOUSE OF WORSHIP

Religious Practices Committee Carl Sinderbrand and Leslie Coff, Co-Chairs

During this pandemic year, the Religious Practices Committee has continued to support and applaud our clergy, Rabbi Jonathan Biatch and Cantor Jacob Niemi, for their continued innovation, energy, and attention to our rituals amidst a changing health climate.

Beginning in June 2020, our clergy and staff had already begun to innovate—using technology to create and sustain our Temple Beth El community.

It has been, at its center, a year of learning—and Zoom has been particularly effective for a myriad of shared experiences despite the physical distance.

Shabbat Services were available on Facebook Live with smaller ritual opportunities available through Zoom—including the monthly Accidental Minyan, now renamed Shabbat Morning Joyful Worship.

B'nai mitzvah—although one was held in the sanctuary early in the pandemic—were either deferred or held at home but shared on Zoom thanks to the flexibility and creativity of the families, staff, and clergy. We have begun to have some back in the sanctuary, and during the construction/renovation they will be shared in the Weinstein Community Court.

There have been shivah minyanim, funerals, and memorials for our member families as well.

Shavuot was held as a community-wide online event.

Toward the end of the summer, Rabbi Biatch created online learning leading up to the High Holy Days, and TBE staff and clergy held a Shofars Across Madison event.

Clergy and staff executed a beautiful High Holy Days virtual ritual experience. Many congregants reported that, in many ways, it was so very spiritual for them to welcome Temple Beth El into their own homes without the hustle and bustle of in-person events.

The Religious Practices Committee sponsored the Sukkah Inside online event, featuring a panel introducing spiritual, artistic, and ecological meanings of that beautiful festival. Congregants were invited to submit short videos of them dancing for the Simchat Torah Dance Party compilation.

With the assistance of TBE staff, wonderful Hanukkah programming was shared in December.

Temple Beth El held an online Tu Bishvat seder in January, bringing light and hope (and grape juice) into the homes of many congregants during the long pandemic winter.

Clergy and staff worked very hard (and creatively!) to bring Purim into our homes. A good time was had by all.

Because Cantor Jacob Niemi's in-person installation was cancelled in March 2020, we held an online installation, and we hope to have an in-person community event in fall 2021.

Rabbi Biatch led a task force to bring two Czech Holocaust scrolls to our congregation. One Torah was sponsored by Temple members and another by a father of Temple members. Rabbi Biatch enjoyed an epic voyage to collect the scrolls, and they will be shared with our community as we are welcomed back into our synagogue.

Thank you to Rabbi Biatch and Cantor Niemi—and to the wonderful and dedicated members of the Religious Practices Committee.





Director of Lifelong Learning

Nicole A. Jahr, RJE

I am privileged to submit this annual report for the 2021 Annual Meeting at Temple Beth El. In my past two annual reports, I have shared the work I was engaged in at Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership to earn a second master's in Jewish educational leadership. Unfortunately, that course of study halted with the pandemic changing education in many ways. I decided that I needed to utilize the time I had for study to research, write, create, and maintain an online program for all the lifelong learning opportunities we offer at TBE.

I do reap many benefits from my time at Spertus. I made many connections with experts in the field of Jewish education and nonprofit management. The two big capstone projects I had started still have implications for our community at Temple Beth El. I am continuing to research spirituality and the connection between addiction and the Jewish community. With this work I am developing a few programs, one of which is a course for our parents and teens to participate in tough conversations in a safe, spiritual environment. My other project in development is using our building to enhance Hebrew and Israel education. Our building is filled with Hebrew, art, ritual objects, and more that many of us walk by without taking notice. Creating the technology to scan a poster next to a Hebrew phrase that will bring up the translation, transliteration, and source will be so

We once again thank a lifelong learning coordinator who will be moving on. Kim Rosenthal has worked on our faculty for five years as our inclusion specialist. She is pursuing a degree at Jewish Theological Seminary but will continue next year in the inclusion specialist role for Religious and Hebrew School. We welcome Kathleen O'Connell as our new lifelong learning coordinator. Kathleen started on June 1 and is excited to learn all about TBE's educational program.

Last year, the Youth Education Committee (aka Religious School Committee) took on the task of accreditation through

the Association of Reform Jewish Educators. We determined to hold off on this accreditation during this school year and revisit the accreditation process in the future. Laurie Borkon continues to lead this committee and I am excited that she has been nominated to join the board as a trustee.

Carol Kantor remains the chair of the Congregational Education Committee (aka Adult Education Committee). Her drive to bring quality scholars to our members is amazing. I continue to be impressed with the amount of research she does before recommending a scholar.

The Kesher Israel Committee has strengthened its leadership with a new co-chair, Orly Klugman. Orly joins Joanna Berke and has just begun co-leading meetings and sharing ideas. Participating in the Israel Leadership Network and working with a mentor is sparking our passion to bring Israel programs to our congregation. We have continued with the Kesher movies and Kesher Café in an online world. (Last year I reported that we halted these programs—we have come a long way learning the technology!)

David Bookstaff has led the Youth Engagement Committee (aka Youth Committee) and will be stepping away within this fiscal year. His youngest is currently in Israel at Heller High, and he will be focusing his volunteer time on the Board of Trustees and as a Food-A-Rama co-chair with Sisterhood. We have been very happy with our youth advisors who kept up programming throughout the summer and school year online and, when it was safe, in person. Jo Golden, MaTTY advisor, is working with Katie Parrish, who will take over as advisor on June 1. Dan Maloney continues as our MuTTY advisor. His creative programming has just started developing young leaders. His fishing event at Lake Wingra and work with the youth advisory board are two examples of his passion for our youth. Allison Wexler continues as our JEWniors advisor and camp intern. She will be with us one more school year as her studies at UW will end and so will the #Partnership Legacy grant that has helped us employ Allison.



I want to elevate and recognize every member of our faculty who have provided their energy, patience, and perseverance during this challenging school year. Last year, at the time of the annual meeting, I was in the "thick of things to determine the best way to move forward in a post-quarantine world." Now, I am in the thick of things thankfully working through the best way to move forward in a post-pandemic world and looking forward to being back in person in the fall (continuing with online options for some).

94STUDENTS ENROLLED IN RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

62STUDENTS ENROLLED IN HEBREW SCHOOL

OVER 90%

AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE RATE
IN RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

PEOPLE PARTICIPATED IN 7
ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

15
CAMPERSHIPS WERE AWARDED

39
STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN
YOUTH GROUP PROGRAMMING

Youth Education Committee Laurie Borkon, Chair

Since COVID-19 closed down our world in March 2020, Nicole Jahr and the Youth Education Committee have engaged in a continuous calibration process to ensure TBE delivers a safe, consistent, high-quality Jewish education.

In summer 2020, Nicole and the Youth Education Committee recruited a "focused group of parents" to engage in a series of planning sessions to prepare for the 2020–2021 school year. One of our key challenges was that TBE had to make decisions for the coming school year before the public schools did. Typically, it is ideal for religious schools to follow the decisions of the public schools, not be in the lead. Our group took cues from the Staying Safe in Changing Times task force. In additional to the input from the larger "focused group of parents" and committee input, we held all-school informational sessions with small-group breakout sessions to solicit parent input.

Ultimately, Nicole, with input from the committee and TBE staff, determined that Religious School and Hebrew school would be virtual for the 2020–2021 school year. Consistent with several other congregations, our Religious School used a shorter "module" curriculum that lent itself to the online world. Modules included "What's Jewish about Baseball?," "What's Jewish about Wisconsin?," etc.

As part of the continuous calibration process, parents provided input on the modules. Generally, younger students liked the modules. Seventh grade families were eager to start the 7th grade curriculum of Holocaust and immigration, which was planned for second semester. We received requests to separate Song Circle by grade levels. This is in the works for next year. Hebrew School being remote was well received.

We consider this year's program a success. We made it through the COVID year.

Now, we are planning for the 2021–2022 school year—and beyond. Nicole Jahr and TBE leadership have contracted with Dr. Evie Rotstein, renowned national expert from Hebrew Union College in New York, to advise as we plan for the future of TBE Religious and Hebrew School in the post-COVID world. Dr. Rotstein uses a four-phase visioning/planning process: Looking Inward, Looking Outward, Looking Forward, Moving Forward. We are currently moving through the Looking Inward and Looking Outward phases.

As part of the Looking Inward process, we recently conducted a survey with parents. The response rate was incredibly high (69% of parents responded). This is a very strong indication that parents are both interested in Jewish education and also have strong opinions to share. Results indicated that 76% are in favor of Religious School in person; 65% are in favor of Hebrew School remotely.

Next steps in the planning process will be determining if we will have a remote option for Religious School and when that will be scheduled, if we will have an in-person option for Hebrew School, and what curriculum will we use.

We have a strong and growing Youth Education Committee. We are confident we can support Nicole and TBE in their decision making for our children's Jewish education.



Youth Engagement Committee David Bookstaff, Chair

It was an interesting year for TBE youth programming. Our year started out with new advisors for both our MaTTY (high school) and MuTTY (middle school) groups. Working events through Zoom was a challenge with the kids who were on Zoom for school all day and then asked to participate in youth programming on Zoom at night or on the weekends. We pivoted and, instead of focusing on increasing numbers, moved to focus on those kids who did engage, reaching those most interested on a much deeper level and being there for them.

We experimented with different types of programs, and our advisors, Jo Golden, Dan Maloney, and Allison Wexler, did a great job of trying new things. While event attendance was unpredictable, those that did join in enjoyed themselves, and the feedback we received was all positive. As the COVID situation began to improve, we were able to also have some in-person events—big thanks to all our advisors for being flexible and willing to make things happen.

As our year winds down, we are saying goodbye to Jo Golden, who has worked with the MaTTY teens for the past year, and welcoming Katie Parrish as our new MaTTY advisor. Katie is joining us with an incredible amount of enthusiasm and some great ideas to continue improving our youth programming. If things continue to improve in our COVID world, we may even

see another Pasta Extravaganza and Dessert Auction in our future!

On a national level, COVID has continued to affect NFTY and the programming being planned (events like regional kallot and national programming). The national staff has been reduced to just a few regional advisors, and in-person regional events are expected to be limited to just one event next year. As a small community, the regional events are a huge draw for our students, and we expect the lack of these events to affect our student participation. Our MaTTY Board, however, is extremely strong for next year and I am confident that, as usual, our youth will impress us all!

Dan and Allison will be continuing to work with our younger students, and their experience will certainly help next year as we anticipate much more in-person programming including our monthly Youth Sunday programming plan.

It has been a difficult year engaging our youth, and I want to give a special thank-you to not only Jo, Dan, and Allison, who have worked hard advising our youth, but also Nicole and Kim, who have really gone above and beyond in working with the youth and advisors to keep everyone organized, motivated, and constantly improving!





Adult Education Committee Carole Kantor, Chair

Swarsensky Memorial Weekend, November 13–15, 2020

Rabbi Joshua Weinberg, who serves as both vice president for Israel and Reform Zionism of the Union of Reform Judaism and vice president of the Association of Reform Zionism of America, focused his 2020 Swarsensky Memorial Weekend presentations on the divisions among Israeli and Diaspora Jews over who should define what constitutes legitimate religious practice in Israel. Voicing the concerns of many Jews that the present arrangement is both politically undemocratic and liturgically uninviting, he proposed an updated Zionist project to reinvent the meaning of "being Jewish in the Jewish state."

Short Course: Braided Histories: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, February 28–March 21, 2021

Using his recently published book, *The Abrahamic Religions*: A *Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2020), as a foundation, Charles Cohen, the E. Gordon Fox Professor of American Institutions, Emeritus, at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, led four Sunday sessions that aimed to view Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as an extended family of religions grounded in their veneration of the One God proclaimed by Abraham. Throughout, the course paid particular attention to how political contexts continually

reshaped the ways in which Jews, Christians, and Muslims thought about and treated each other. Charles has been a member of TBE since 1988.

Short Course: Prophets of the Hebrew Bible: Messengers of God or Societal Conscience?, April 11–May 2, 2021

Drawing on his decades of historical and religious scholarship, Perry Asher led an enthusiastic group in four Sunday sessions as they explored the Ancient Near Eastern context of biblical prophecy and placed the prophets in their social and theological setting. These prophets were unique in calling on both social elites and the people to live up to the requirements of their God. Perry has been a longtime member of TBE.

Weekly Sessions: Jewish Texts for Challenging Times, Thursdays, June 24–July 22

Leslie Coff resumed her popular class, begun in spring 2020, to continue to explore biblical poetic texts that inspire us, lift us, and transform our ways of viewing our personal situations and the world at large.

Committee members: Carole Kantor, chair, Lillian Abrams, Jane Armstrong, Joanna Berke, Charles Cohen, Felyce Gilford, David Kopstein, Pam Olson, Steve Olson.







Kesher Israel Committee Joanna Berke and Orly Klugman, Co-Chairs

This past year Orly Klugman joined forces with Joanna Berke to become co-chair of the Kesher Israel Committee of Temple Beth El. We have jointly held several meetings with our 17 regular members and have others scheduled before the end of the year.

We have joined with Rabbi Biatch and Nicole Jahr, director of lifelong learning, to become active parts of a cohort attempting to bring Israeli Jews and Jews from the Diaspora closer together. In addition, our aim is to attempt to unite various factions under the umbrella of Israel's Declaration of Independence. Assisting with this effort is our facilitator and mentor: Sherrill Neff. We welcome all TBE members to join!

In addition, we have shown two movies, "The Matchmaker"

and "In Search of Israeli Cuisine." We are scheduled to show "Wrestling Jerusalem" on June 16, 2021.

Rabbi Biatch spoke at a Kesher Café regarding "Israel in the Biden Era."

The Kesher Israel Committee will lead a Friday night service to be held on October 28, 2021.

Our goals for the upcoming year are to continue current programming and developing methods of including the younger generation (teens) in developing a deepening interest in Israel, particularly by encouraging trips to the then hopefully calm country.



Social Action Committee

Marcia Vandercook and Sherie Sondel, Co-Chairs

For the Social Action Committee, this was a challenging year. We adapted our efforts on hunger and homelessness to provide services at a distance for members of our community who were hard-hit by the pandemic. In July, the death of George Floyd at the hands of the police brought renewed commitment to the hard work of pursuing racial justice. Rapid changes in public policy on immigration and refugee resettlement presented challenges throughout the year. We worked through the summer and fall to get out the vote and fight efforts at voter suppression. In February, we formed a new action team to work on the urgent issues of environment and climate.

Hunger and Homelessness

The work we do to alleviate hunger and homelessness in our community continues to be imperative. For many years TBE has supported Porchlight Men's Shelter by cooking and serving regular meals. Although our in-person efforts have had to be curtailed, that hasn't stopped us from providing food however we can. Twice a month, our volunteers cook large pans of food and bring them to the Catholic Multicultural Center on Madison's south side for packaging and distribution, coordinated by Sue Levy. We also cook quarterly meals for Healing House, a medical respite center for people experiencing homelessness, coordinated by Cathy Rotter.

Thanks to a generous matching grant, the High Holy Day Food Drive raised over \$15,000. We were able to donate \$12,500 to Second Harvest Foodbank, making TBE a "silver level" sponsor. TBE was the only nonprofit organization to give at this amount, and Second Harvest was thrilled to have us listed as a sponsor to motivate other organizations to do the same. The remainder of the money went for direct food assistance provided by our community partners at the Catholic Multicultural Center, Mount Zion Baptist Church, Centro Hispano, Porchlight, and Food for Thought.

Every year at Thanksgiving, the TBE Religious School students (and parents) contribute cans and boxes to Thanksgiving food baskets from the Goodman Community Center. This year, we used the "front porch" method to collect the food, where members dropped off cans and boxes at one of eight houses scattered around town. Two students, Henry Riley and

Gabe Staresinic, made working on the Thanksgiving drive their b'nai mitzvah project and collected enough for two dozen baskets by reaching out to neighbors and friends as well.

In response to the pandemic, the weekend food program for Thoreau Elementary School expanded its efforts and moved to home delivery for families from the elementary and middle schools feeding into West High. Asked about the impact of the program, the principal of Thoreau said: "HUGE! We could not have done this work without them. They are providing space, resources, people support, financial supports, and more to create something innovative and unique for the whole West feeder pattern. They are quite remarkable and have reinvented what it means to be a partner."

Although refugee admissions were severely restricted, a few families did arrive during the year. Led by Sherie Sondel, our volunteers worked with the JSS refugee resettlement program (Jewish Social Services of Madison) to set up apartments for new refugee families and provided other families with ongoing support.

Racial Justice Action Team

The Racial Justice Action Team, led by co-chairs Betsy Abramson and Lindsay Mindlin, addresses structural racism in our society through education and advocacy. This year was both extraordinary and urgent, as local and national events have called to Reform Jews for a strong response and full engagement. Working closely with clergy and staff, this team offered TBE members many opportunities to participate in racial justice work despite the pandemic:

- After George Floyd's murder, Temple joined other Jewish organizations in Madison by participating in a peaceful march and rally downtown.
- Temple staff and members of the Social Action Committee organized two well-attended listening sessions in July to discuss the Jewish imperative to address the racial aspects of policing.
- We organized a series of events beginning on Dr.



BEIT TZEDEK—HOUSE OF JUSTICE

Martin Luther King Jr. weekend instead of the usual Temple retreat. This included a Shabbat service honoring the legacy of Dr. King, a family music program on music of the civil rights movement, and discussion of a sermon on rethinking race within the Jewish community. We also collected over \$3,500 in donations to buy personal care items for distribution through the Allied Wellness Center; we hope to make this collection an annual event.

- In February we organized an all-Temple read and discussion of Isabel Wilkerson's Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents.
- TBE members Erica Serlin and Lynn Silverman led two cohorts of Seven Guided Conversations About Race, with organizational help from action team co-chair Lindsay Mindlin.
- We deepened our involvement with the Nehemiah Center for Urban Leadership Development by recruiting individuals to serve as court observers in the Dane County courts and helping supply food for young students. Several members, including Rabbi Biatch, have participated in the Nehemiah "Justified Anger" Black History course.
- Every week we provide a Racial Justice Action of the Week in TBE's Weekly Happenings email designed to help us educate, affiliate, donate, and advocate.
- Finally, this summer, we were awarded a generous grant from Jewish Federation of Madison, enabling us to partner with the Boys & Girls Club of Dane County to provide seven summer internships for students with TBE members' places of employment.

Going forward, team members will be participating in the URJ Religious Action Center's racial justice campaign to mobilize Reform congregations across North America to campaign for voting rights, address police reform, and make our own congregations more welcoming to Jews of color.

Immigrant Rights Action Team

The Immigrant Rights Action Team, chaired by Erica Serlin and Lynn Silverman, works closely with other community organizations to support just and compassionate immigration policy. This year we continued our focus on education and advocacy.

In May we supported Dane Sanctuary Coalition's "Big Read" of the book *The Death and Life of Aida Hernandez:* A Border Story, which told the true story of an undocumented immigrant while providing background on our immigration policies, weaving together history, economics and politics. We facilitated a discussion of the book so that Temple members could delve deeper into the immigration crisis and share with others, and made an author interview available.

In June, we co-sponsored with Dane Sanctuary Coalition an educational presentation and action ask entitled "The

Impact of COVID-19 on Undocumented Immigrants." The presentation, by Aissa Olivarez, managing attorney for the Community Immigration Law Center, was tied to our receipt of a \$1,500 mini grant from the Gilbert and Eleanor Kraus Initiative for Immigrant and Refugee Justice.

During the latter part of 2020, with all that was going on with the election and racial justice issues, we focused on supporting Temple's racial justice and civic engagement/voting initiatives with the belief that these were essential for achieving justice for immigrants as well. During this time, we continued to disseminate information and advocacy actions in the area of immigrant rights.

In February 2021, the Immigrant Rights Action Team and Dane Sanctuary Coalition sponsored a talk by Erin Barbato, the director of the Immigrant Justice Clinic at UW Law School. Dr. Barbato gave an engaging and informative presentation of the policy reforms that have started, or which have been promised by the Biden administration regarding immigrants and refugees. We then split up into small groups to brainstorm ideas for possible next steps for congregational action.

Civic Engagement Action Team

In early 2020, the Social Action Committee formed a Civic Engagement Action Team, chaired by Marcia Vandercook, to work on nonpartisan voter registration and turnout. This campaign was modeled on the URJ's "Every Voice, Every Vote" campaign. We attended trainings offered by the League of Women Voters and started registering voters until in-person activities had to be suspended in March.

Some members offered socially distanced voter registration at food pantries and colleges, while others shifted to staffing voter hotlines and distributing written information. We helped the Madison City Clerk by preparing a record number of absentee ballots, assisting with early voting, accepting absentee ballots at Democracy in the Park, and serving as poll workers in four elections.

In August we held a postcard writing event to help combat voter suppression in six targeted states, a successful strategy to get unregistered and deregistered voters back on the voting rolls and able to cast their ballots. More than 30 members convened on Zoom to learn more about the campaign and then broke into smaller groups to hand-write and decorate postcard messages to disenfranchised voters of color. Many more TBE volunteers finished their postcards at home; we eventually reached more than 1,800 potential voters

In the fall we helped organize two presentations on voting rights, with a strong focus on voter suppression tactics and what we can do about them. At our social action Shabbat in August, the speaker was Ryeshia Farmer, coordinator of the "Rights for All" campaign of ACLU of Wisconsin. In September, Matt Rothschild of the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign discussed the history and current practice of voter suppression in America and in Wisconsin.

Throughout the year, we participated in the statewide



BEIT TZEDEK—HOUSE OF JUSTICE

Wisconsin Interfaith Civic Engagement Project, a joint project of Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice and the Wisconsin Council of Churches. Temple Beth El was recognized for contributing the most volunteers and hours from one congregation. This year, the campaign has focused on holding our new elected officials accountable for social justice policies and maintaining the right to vote in the face of many state voter suppression bills.

Environment and Climate Change Action Team

The Environment and Climate Change Action Team was formed in March 2021 by a small group of members who believe it is important for TBE to engage members in discussion and action related to addressing the environmental impact of our everyday activities. Marta Karlov is the chair.

The team started by drafting a mission statement to guide our actions: To fulfill the Jewish imperative of *tikkun olam* by encouraging environmental stewardship within the congregation, and to inspire, educate, and mobilize our congregation to protect our planet from the negative impacts of climate change and increase environmental consciousness.

In addition, if we are successful, we will accomplish the following:

- Greater sensitivity to the earth
- Empowerment to act locally and think globally
- Impact on individuals, TBE, and the community

Our focus so far has been on researching what local and Jewish organizations are doing in this space that we can leverage, and on building awareness in the congregation through targeted communications.

The first event we are actively participating is the Loop the Lake! action run by the Clean Lakes Alliance. We built a couple of routes and selected June 13 as the date for TBE members to participate together.

We also published an article in the May edition of the Social Justice Spotlight in which we interviewed Dan Esser about the many actions our House Committee has taken to reduce our impact on the environment.

Other activities we are planning include a Big Read with support of Men's Club and Sisterhood, and a Shabbat dedicated to environmental protection coupled with an ecological fair. In addition, we are looking into collaborating more closely with Friends of Lake Wingra and the UW Arboretum.

Connecting with local environmental organizations has also been a priority. These include Wisconsin Interfaith Power and Light and the Dane County Office of Energy and Sustainability. Both have provided us with an incredible wealth of resources to leverage and events to promote. As a result we promoted the Wisconsin Faith Climate Action Workshops in April and the Faith Advocacy for Climate Justice Event held by the Wisconsin Council of Churches. We expect that these connections will continue to yield opportunities to promote and participate in different events throughout the year.

As you can see, we are always looking to work with other Temple members on social justice issues. You can find articles about our programs, social justice issues, and "no-contact" volunteer opportunities in the Social Justice Spotlight email newsletter, published every six to eight weeks.

