

# Temple Beth-El

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RABBI RACHEL SAFMAN – SPIRITUAL LEADER  
RABBI SUZANNE BRODY – DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND YOUTH PROGRAMMING  
RABBI SCOTT LEVI GLASS – RABBI EMERITUS

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Dear Temple Beth-El Members and Friends,

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...” Charles Dickens, Tale of Two Cities.

What sense would Charles Dickens have made out of all that has transpired in our lives in the past year? After wishing a fond and heartfelt farewell to Rabbi Glass and Sharon, we pivoted to the unknown of our interim hire, Rabbi Spitzer. Then, as Rabbi Spitzer was settling in and providing us with her reassuring guidance, and as we joyously confirmed that Rabbi Safman would join us as our new rabbi in July, the scourge of the pandemic took hold. We retreated to our homes, practiced social distancing, donned our masks and discovered that ‘Zoom’ was something other than the first word we sing in the song, Zum Gali Gali.

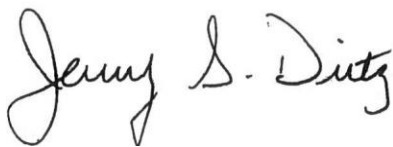
To say we are living in unprecedented times is an understatement, but despite the fact that most of us have not set foot inside our beautiful synagogue since March, as a congregation we have risen to meet the challenge and we are stronger for it. Participation in morning and afternoon minyanim and Shabbat services remains strong. Interest in Adult Ed classes and other on-line offerings remains high. Plans are already in place for virtual Religious School classes to be offered, and B’Yachad families are committed to continuing that important pre-school program. With a revamped website and the addition of the powerful organizational program, ShulCloud, we head into the new year poised to put our very best foot forward. We are Temple Beth-El and though some might say it’s the ‘worst of times’ we are making the best of it!

As our Temple community looks forward to the New Year, the financial stability of the congregation must be maintained. Funds collected through temple membership dues are not sufficient to sustain our operations. This year our total anticipated income will be \$559,111, with only 54% of this sum (\$300,000) coming from membership dues. Contributions to this Kol Nidre appeal provide the greatest share of the remaining funds required to support Temple activities. Every year we strive for 100% of the congregation to participate in the Kol Nidre Campaign. Every donation, regardless of size, makes a difference, and you are truly helping the Temple. Our combined target this year for the Kol Nidre and Yizkor campaigns is \$104,080.

As many of you know, Rabbi Safman and the members of the Ritual Committee have been hard at work making plans for the upcoming High Holidays. Many of you have participated in Zoom focus group meetings to share your thoughts about what you would like to see happen. In the very near future you can expect to hear how we plan to hold meaningful services and how you can participate. While our seats for services (which have always been free for all who attend), will be remote this year, it is our hope that you will still feel that strong congregational connection.

Please think about what Temple Beth-El means to you and to the broader community, and please support it to the best of your ability by sending a Kol Nidre contribution in the enclosed envelope. Any amount that you are able to provide is deeply appreciated. As always, your checks may be mailed directly to the Temple office or donations of any amount can be processed on the Temple website: [www.tbeithaca.org](http://www.tbeithaca.org)

With all our best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year,



Jerry Dietz



Jerry Davis

Please note: Kol Nidre and Yizkor forms are included in this mailing. If you wish to have the names of your loved ones read during the Yom Kippur Yizkor service, please fill out the enclosed form and send it to the Temple office with a check for your combined Kol Nidre and Yizkor donations. Alternatively, you may submit this information and make your donation on our website. Because of the length of the Yizkor list, only those names that are specifically requested by members of the congregation will be read from the pulpit.