

TEMPLE
SINAI
סיני
OF BERGEN COUNTY

Annual Report
Fiscal Year Ending
June 30, 2021



Annual Meeting Agenda

D'var Torah / Rabbi's Remarks

President's Remarks

Presentation of the 2021-2022 Operating Budget

Presentation of 2021-2022 Nominating Committee Slate

President	<u>Executive Committee:</u> Paul Seitelman
Vice Presidents	Rob Goldstein (Finance, Fundraising, & Philanthropy) Franci Steinberg (Worship, Music, & Programming) Lynne Stewart (Membership, Marketing, & Education)
Recording Secretary	Sabra Waxman
Treasurer	Cheryl Black

Trustees:	<u>Members of the Board of Trustees:</u> Leny Davidson Dani Elkins Lori Golden Joe Hecht Jacklyn Katz Peggy Kabakow Wolf Konstant Jon Pasternak Eileen Pleva Seth Plevoy Ava Rattigan Jason Rubach Brad Sona Ronni Zlotnick
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Immediate Past President	Anne-Marie Bennoun
Sisterhood President	Hilary Eth
Brotherhood President	Jack Reich

In Appreciation and Recognition

Service as a Member of the Executive Committee Anne-Marie Bennoun, and a Member of the Board of Trustees Jill Horbacewicz, and Erik Maschler.

Mazal Tov to:

The 2020-2021 Officers and Board of Trustees for their commitment and dedication to our community, and the 2021-2022 Officers and Board of Trustees on working towards an exciting future.

Many Thanks

With warmest thanks to the volunteers who made everything work this year – to those who planned the budget and those who planted the seedlings, to those who brought speakers to our lectures and those who brought food to our homes, to those who raised ideas and to those who raised funds. Those of you who gave your time and talents to Temple Sinai have made a significant contribution to our community, and we thank you!

Rabbi's Message

As Jews, when we face difficult challenges, it is our custom to turn to the Torah to help us understand our experiences and give us hope. Of all the stories in the Torah, the most significant one – our master narrative, if you will – is the story of the exodus. Usually, when we think about the exodus we think about what we celebrate on Passover: The great moment of our liberation from slavery in Egypt. But, the longer part of the story is what happens after that: The 40 years of wandering in the wilderness before reaching the Promised Land. The Torah spends much more time describing the hardships of the wilderness journey than it does the hardships of slavery. That long and difficult march was the crucible through which our people was formed and the school of hard knocks through which we learned how to cope with the challenges we faced throughout our history.

This pandemic has been a type of desert march for us. Granted, fifteen months isn't forty years, and sitting in our heated and air conditioned homes is not like being exposed to the hot sun and night time chill of the desert. No doubt our ancestors had it a lot worse. Nevertheless, the sudden, radical change in lifestyle, the isolation, the economic losses, illnesses and deaths that were beyond our control, made us feel scared and vulnerable in ways most of us had never felt before. At the same time, we learned so much from this school of hard knocks and there is no doubt that as individuals and as a congregation we are stronger because of it.

Our goal at Temple Sinai over these past fifteen months has been to help our members survive and adapt by bringing *Torah* – our texts, our traditions, our community – to you in your homes through virtual means. Our worship services, classes, and programs have been a lifeline for many people: a place to connect with our community, to share the challenges we face, to overcome isolation, to find inspiration to persevere and keep our chins up during this crisis.

We “reinvented” the High Holy Days by reshaping our High Holy Day services so they would be meaningful and effective for our congregants watching on Zoom, as only the clergy could be in the sanctuary. Services included beautifully produced videos of our choir singing some of our High Holy Day favorites and videos of lay members doing *aliyot* the *Torah*. We added new elements to our High Holy Day program this year, including 3 moving talks by members of our community who were on the front lines responding the COVID-19 pandemic, and a discussion with two Black members of our community about their experiences and the Black Lives Matter movement. And we still found a way to meet in person outside for *Tashlich* at the Demarest Duck Pond.

Throughout the year, our Friday evening services and *Shabbat* morning *Torah* study have continued to be consistently well-attended, attracting both our core of regulars and many others who, in the past came to Temple only for High Holy Days, *yahrtzeits*, lifecycle events or special programs. We added a weekly *Havdalah* service on Saturday evenings. Cantor Nitza, Rabbi Kramer Mazer and I had fun with our young families at Tot *Shabbat* each month. We held our festival services online, featuring many unique elements, including a Passover *Seder* I lead from my home and a special *Tikkun Leil Shavuot* with special guest, Rabbi Mark Sameth. Together with a group of Reform rabbinic colleagues, we ran a “scholars-in-their-residence” series, bringing together a number of Reform congregations online to hear some of the most dynamic rabbis and teachers in our movement. We continued our weekly Lunch and Learn program, “Shmooze on the News.” While not the same as gathering in person, our Jewish learning and observance has been meaningful, and the technology allowed us to feel a surprising level of intimacy and connection with one another.

The pastoral care we provide has been even more important than ever, as so many people were ill this past year, both due to COVID-19 and other causes. We also grieve that there have been many deaths among congregants and their families during this time. With funerals limited to small, graveside observances most of the year, and gatherings for *shiva* prohibited, we employed creative alternatives, including both *shiva* services online and “drive-by *shiva*” observances.

During and after the election this past November and the attack on the Capitol in Washington D.C., Temple Sinai was a primary place for our members to process what was going on through a Jewish lens. We held special prayer vigils and discussions to help heal the wounds that these events had wrought.

While I am pleased to note that our congregation has risen to the challenge in providing all of these meaningful and inspiring experiences for our members, I also want to recognize this time as the most difficult crisis I have faced in my 28 years in the rabbinate. I am thankful that we have such outstanding staff and lay

leaders in our time of need. We have collaborated daily to adapt Temple services and programs, manage our budget crisis, and raise the funds necessary for us to continue to survive and thrive.

We owe a particular debt of gratitude to Anne-Marie Bennoun for the yeoman's work she has done as President, both before and since this crisis began. Her passion, values, wisdom, integrity, boundless energy, and work ethic have made her the main sail of our Temple ship as we have navigated some very rough seas. Thank you, Anne-Marie, for being a tenacious, strong, and remarkable leader! She has been assisted by a very able and dedicated group of officers on our Executive Committee: Vice-presidents Rob Goldstein, Paul Seitelman, Franci Steinberg and Lynne Stewart; Treasurer Cheryl Black; Secretary Sabra Waxman; Sisterhood President Hilary Eth; and Brotherhood President Jack Reich. They have played an invaluable role in keeping our ship afloat during this storm.

When it comes to synagogue management and our budget, the man at the helm has been our Executive Director, Joe Slade. Where would our Temple be without Joe right now? I dare not try to imagine. Along with Anne-Marie, Joe has been my partner every day, charting our course and helping to steer the ship.

While we have not been able to stand together on the *bimah* for several months, Cantor Nitza Shamah and Rabbi Kramer Mazer remain my partners in the spiritual leadership of Temple Sinai. Cantor Nitza has done a remarkable job figuring out how to move our services online. She gets the lion's share of the credit for the high quality of our worship services on Zoom, while continuing to teach our *b'nei mitzvah* students. Keeping to the sailing analogy, Rabbi Kramer Mazer has been that versatile sailor who, while successfully running her own part of our vessel – the Religious School – has jumped in to help all over the ship when it has been needed.

Risa Tannenbaum, meanwhile, has worked night and day to meet the challenge of managing our Early Childhood Center under the most adverse conditions, creating an online pre-school program and supporting the young families of our community, who have had unique challenges during this pandemic. It is hard to believe that Risa is retiring from her position as Director of our Early Childhood Center at the end of June. She has built a remarkable school and young community at our Temple. We owe her a huge debt of gratitude. Similarly, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to Jaki Raider, who worked hand in hand with Risa to make Temple Sinai's ECC the best in the region. She is moving on to a bigger and better position as director of a pre-school. We wish her all the best in her new endeavor.

Many thanks as well to our other support staff, who have adapted well to the challenge of working at home. To Hillary Hans, Joan Sherman and my own Executive Assistant, Sally Collins: Thank you! You guys are the best!

And to Carlos Arizaga and our custodial staff: As always, you have done what you always do, without fanfare or applause. Thank you for the special cleaning of our Temple building so we know that when we enter there we are safe. You continue to be a blessing to us each and every day.

Speaking of returning safely to our Temple building, I am so please to share that will be returning to in-person worship on Friday evening, June 18!! We will join together for a Rock Shabbat Service led by Cantor Nitza Shamah and our Rock Shabbat Band. That same night we will say farewell to our Early Childhood Director, Risa Tannenbaum and her assistant, Jaki Raider. If you are not ready to join us in person, please join us on Zoom, as we will be streaming the service from the sanctuary. We plan on meeting in person for worship on Friday evenings throughout the summer we will meet in person for worship. Shabbat morning Torah study will also meet in person, starting on June 19. Those who cannot make it in person will be able to participate via Zoom and Facebook live.

Like our ancestors, we have traveled the long road through the wilderness and are about to enter the Promised (we pray, post-pandemic) land. We don't know exactly what this "new normal" will look like but we know that it will be great because we will come to it with a renewed appreciation of our community and how wonderful it is to be together. We have learned so much and have become closer as a community, having made the journey together. Let us join hands and continue the march to the Promised Land!

Stay healthy and God bless,



Rabbi Jordan Millstein

President's Message

"Never before has Temple Sinai closed its doors." I remember writing this line with tears in my eyes and anxiety in my heart for the future of our congregation. It was 16 months ago. "Temple Sinai on Zoom" was born overnight out of a preservation instinct not uncommon in the history of our people.

As we are about to re-enter our sanctuary on June 18 and celebrate our first in-person Shabbat with our Rock Shabbat Band, I feel hope: hope for the future our sacred community; hope for the financial health of our congregation.

The impact of your dedication to Temple Sinai throughout the pandemic cannot be overstated. Thanks to your generosity, we have raised over \$560,000 for our COVID-19 Emergency Fund to help those among us hard hit by the pandemic, keep our commitment towards our employees, and pay our bills. Thanks to a substantial PPP loan from the federal government, and the financial prudence of our Board of Trustees, we will close Fiscal Year 2021 in the black, having paid off our line of credit entirely and kept our obligation on our construction loan. Furthermore, we expect a balanced budget in Fiscal Year 2022.

To transition to a post COVID-19 congregational life and with an eye towards ensuring that Temple Sinai continues to thrive for generations to come, we will be launching a Temple-wide visioning process this summer. Our goal is to "audit our souls" and develop a plan to ensure the future of our congregation. We will seek to understand the ways in which we engage with and relate to one another, as well as our ability to attract new families in our midst. We will assess our educational programs, from our Early Childhood Center to our Religious School. We will analyze our financial model and governing structure. I encourage all of you to participate in focus groups and town hall meetings throughout the process.

No President's term can be complete without thanking the many people who have made Temple Sinai successful during this period.

To our retiring ECC director, Risa Tannenbaum, thank you for making our Early Childhood Center a source of pride for our congregation for the past 13 years. Thanks to you and your dedicated team, our children attended school in person safely this past year.

To Rabbi Kramer-Mazer, thank you and your resourceful team of teachers for creating a hybrid model that allowed our students to continue pursuing their religious education during the pandemic.

To Cantor Nitza Shamah, thank you for filling our hearts with beautiful, inspiring music every Shabbat from your den. Thank you for recording new music with special guests and keeping us singing in front of our computers.

To our administrative and custodial staff, thank you for your hard work behind the scenes during these unprecedented times.

To Rabbi Jordan Millstein and Executive Director Joe Slade, thank you for guiding, mentoring, supporting, and inspiring me. Working hand in hand with you has been an incredibly rewarding and enriching experience. Our partnership has sealed our friendship.

To my fellow trustees and partners on Zoom, it has been an honor to serve our congregation with you.

To my fellow congregants, thanks to all of you for your support.

May our eternal light forever shine in our sanctuary and in our souls.

L'Shalom,

Anne-Marie Bennoun

Cantor's Message

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your friendship and support during this past challenging year. It was encouraging and comforting to know we were able to remain united and connected in spite of having to operate online for so

long. Thank you for making our musical program possible and for helping me keep our music alive and creative. Thank you, Anne-Marie Bennoun, Rabbi Millstein, the Board and our staff for your tireless and dedicated leadership.

Here are the musical highlights of this past year:

Cynthia Powell along with our High Holy Day choir, Sam and Hiroko Rhodes, Marcy Rosen, Elaine Christy, Elliot Roman, Allison Sniffin and Kobi Malkin joined me in the sanctuary and recorded a number of beautiful, fresh and creative musical arrangements of our *Shabbat* and High Holy Days prayers. Sharing these recordings while conducting services online has kept our services vibrant and enjoyable.

Even though we were not able to gather for Rock *Shabbat* in person, our Rock *Shabbat* Band joined singer/songwriter Elana Arian virtually and brought the special flavor of Rock *Shabbat* to our homes. Hosting Elana Arian on *Shabbat Shirah* was made possible by the generosity of our Sisterhood. Thank you, Hilary Eth and Sisterhood, for your annual gift of music and for your care and support.

Rock *Shabbat* is coming back soon. On June 18th our band will gather on the *Bimah* in person and honor Risa Tannenbaum for her years of love and dedication to our Temple family and the ECC.

In the meantime, let me thank all our band members Ethel Abrams, Sandy Gabe, Jonah Gold, Joe Hecht, Andrew Hollender, Ross Mazer, Rabbi Jordan Millstein, Jonathan Pasternak, Jack Reich, Barbara Rosenfeld, Roger Schnur and Paul Seitelman. I am so blessed to have you guys and looking forward to playing together in the Sanctuary.

Thank you, Jon Pasternak and Jack Reich, for joining us at various *Shabbat* services during the year and sharing your talent and spirit with all of us.

My deepest thanks to Cynthia Powell, our accompanist and choral director, for her dedication, her wonderful music, creative ideas, beautiful arrangements and great musical connections. We are lucky to always be surrounded by talented musicians and by such fine and inspiring music.

Our High Holy Day choir, and especially Sandy Gabe and Paul Seitelman, made our 2020 High Holy Days fun and satisfying. Special thanks to the Rhodes family for making another Yom Kippur experience beautiful and moving.

Supervising our *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* program has been a wonderful experience and has continued to help me form new bonds with our Temple families. Learning online has not interfered with our students' enthusiasm, confidence and joy. Thank you, Rabbi Beth Kramer-Mazer, Joan Sherman and our dedicated teachers, Gali Stern, Raquel Zypman and Sara Golomb for making the journey smooth and exciting for everyone.

The pandemic forced us to adjust to a new reality but luckily, we were able to enjoy remarkable attendance at services and at various programs.

Back in August my cousin Anat Yahalom shared her inspiring life story with Sisterhood and Brotherhood over zoom.

Around *Purim* Rabbi Kramer-Mazer and I created an online *Rosh Chodesh* program for Sisterhood. On *Yom Hazikaron*, Israel's Memorial Day, a number of us joined together for a commemoration of Israel's fallen soldiers in a ceremony that was hosted by the Consulate General of Israel and Temple Emau-El of NYC. I and a few others told our personal stories of losing family members.

Worshiping online was a new experience for all of us; I enjoyed creating slides for the PowerPoint presentations we shared at services.

As we return - here are some of next year's programs:

Rock *Shabbat Shirah* with Noah Aronson on January 14, 2022

Rock *Shabbat* services with our Rock *Shabbat* Band

Choral music on the holidays and *Simchat Torah* celebration with the Hester Street Klezmer Troupe
Musical programs with special guests - more information to follow

My deepest thanks to our Executive Committee, our Board of Trustees, our Temple committees, and especially our Ritual Committee chaired by Leny Davidson.

I feel blessed to be working with a wonderful senior and support staff. Thank you, Rabbi Jordan Millstein, for your open heart, encouragement, great vision and creative leadership. Thank you, Rabbi Beth Kramer-Mazer for making our collaboration so smooth and enjoyable. To Joe Slade, thank you for directing us with patience and confidence and to Risa Tannenbaum for keeping our ECC community vibrant and joyful. To our outstanding support staff Sally Collins, Hillary Hans, Andrea Kopido, Joan Sherman, Jaki Raider, and Carlos Arizaga and his crew - thank you for making Temple Sinai a wonderful place.

Have a healthy and relaxing summer. Looking forward to seeing everyone in person soon,

Yours,
Cantor Nitza Shamah

2020-2021 Reports

Early Childhood Center

As the school year draws to a close, we are proud of our accomplishments in implementing our curriculum, maintaining our sterling reputation within the community, and, most importantly, keeping the school open and everyone safe during the pandemic. Back in September, when we met remotely with our parents, we explained our intention was to cover the entire curriculum as always, just differently, and we did it! We had an enrollment of 65 children in 6 classes when many schools closed their early childhood centers. The ECC staff achieved a tremendous amount under very unusual demands. We created separate outdoor and indoor play spaces for each class. Except for the 2 year olds, everyone, teachers and children, were required to wear masks throughout the day, indoors and outside except for snack and lunch times. Amazing!

A special thanks to our teachers and maintenance staff for all the hand washing and sanitizing of classrooms and outdoor equipment multiple times per day. That is what it took to keep everyone healthy.

We appreciate Religious School sharing their technology (computers and screens) with the ECC allowing us to Zoom yoga, music and movement sessions in class and for parents to join their children "in class" for Shabbat and holiday celebrations.

Thank you to Lynne Stewart, who spearheaded the COVID-19 Task Force, for an enormous amount of support and guidance. A special acknowledgement is due to Temple member Dr. Steven Weisholtz, who navigated through all the COVID-19 protocols, which constantly evolved throughout the year.

In previous years, we ended the ECC year with a giant carnival. Sadly, state school safety protocols still prevent us from gathering in such a manner. Instead, on June 11th, we invited all our families back to school for a socially distanced Honk and Wave Parade, featuring a balloon artist, juggler, stilt walker, and music. All teachers were present to give out goodies to the children in their cars.

Also on June 11th, the Pre-K children and their families returned for an outdoor, in-person, socially distanced Tot Shabbat service and Moving Up Ceremony where the children received certificates and yearbooks.

We are pleased to announce enrollment for the summer and next year is nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels. At this point in time, we are almost filled to capacity. This is much earlier than in previous years due to the many young families who are leaving the city or have left the city looking for excellence in a Pre-school for their children. Our healthy numbers are attributed to current and past ECC families who spread the word to their friends and relatives. They are our best advertisement.

Many of you know, this is my last year at Temple Sinai. I will be retiring after 13 years as ECC director. It has been my great pleasure to be a part of the Temple Sinai family. I enjoyed working with Rabbi Millstein, Rabbi Kramer-Mazer and Cantor Nitza. We were a great team.

I especially wish to acknowledge Jaki Raider, my assistant who over the last 6 years became my friend as well as my right hand. This job could not have been gone as smoothly without her. It takes a great team to run a



successful school. The hard work and dedication of Jaki and the ECC teachers has proven to be the recipe for our success.

I hope all of our Temple Sinai friends will continue to be healthy and strong. Please continue the good work, Jewishly and communally, that you do here at the temple. There is a great need, especially at this time of healing, to work together.

I wish all the best to you and your families.

Risa Tannenbaum

Paul Winter Helping Hands

Paul Winter Paul Winter Helping Hands is a group of temple members who are available to help other members on an occasional and as needed basis. People may need an occasional ride to a doctor or other appointment or to services. PWHH sends condolence cards, thanks to Miriam Margolin, and get well cards to members. The group is able to do more, if more of us are involved. It is a great way to make our temple "beautiful" on a more personal level and to improve our interpersonal "capital." We need more member involvement. PWHH makes annual donations, on behalf of Temple Sinai to the Community Chest, Family Promise and the Center for Food Action.

If you think that PWHH sounds like a good idea, do you have a little spare time to help someone else? You decide when you are available and you are always able to turn down a request. Please let Hilary Eth (hilaryeth@hotmail.com or 201-621-1097) know when you are available, i.e. which day or days of the week, morning, afternoons or evening.

Contact Hilary if you need assistance or let Rabbi Millstein, Rabbi Kramer-Mazer or Cantor Nitza know.

Financial Report

Finance Committee: Vice-President Rob Goldstein, Vice-President Paul Seitelman, Seth Polevoy, Michael Weitzner, President Anne-Marie Bennoun

We are happy to report that from a financial perspective, Temple Sinai was able to manage very well this year, finishing with a small surplus vs our expected \$113K budget deficit.

First, we were extremely fortunate that our members expressed their love and commitment to the Temple by generously contributing \$550K to our COVID-19 Emergency Fund.

Second, the sage advice from our COVID-19 Task force, creativity and focus by our ECC leadership, and cooperation of our ECC families enabled our school to remain open through a very difficult time, albeit at reduced capacity.

Further, our Executive Director Joe Slade has done an outstanding job of managing our finances. In addition to obtaining full forgiveness of our PPP loan, we were able to meet all of our obligations for the amortization of the construction loan (thanks to the early collection of pledges) and, for the first time in many years, did not need to tap our line of credit to fund operations.

The bottom line is that we are emerging from COVID-19 in excellent financial health thanks the great leadership, focus and generosity of our staff, lay leaders and members.

For fiscal year 2022, we have established a balanced budget which reflects our current level of membership with no increase in dues, maintaining our staffing levels, and significantly increasing enrollment in our ECC and Religious School. We will also need to rely on the continued generosity of members as we resume our in-person programs, keep some of the benefits of virtual connections, and plan many new exciting initiatives for the future.

Cheryl Black
Treasurer

	FY 21 Projected	FY 22 Proposed
Revenue		
Dues & Assessments	\$936,188	\$974,876
High Holy Day Income	\$89,160	\$101,500
Contributions, Ritual & FR Inc	\$625,056	\$335,000
Rental Income	\$3,610	\$15,000
Programming Income	\$2,534	\$3,840
Other Operating Inc	\$23,300	\$24,100
RS and Adult Ed Inc	\$114,261	\$120,728
ECC Income	<u>\$642,880</u>	<u>\$1,202,000</u>
Total Revenue	\$2,436,990	\$2,777,044

Operating Expenses		
Clergy Expense	\$479,689	\$564,274
Religious School Exp	\$315,065	\$293,076
Building and Maintenance Exp	\$388,951	\$430,887
Administration Exp	\$409,448	\$411,951
Ritual & Fundraising Exp	\$120,636	\$206,853
Committee & Program Exp	\$21,535	\$41,874
ECC Exp	<u>\$518,478</u>	<u>\$812,438</u>
Total Operating Expenses	\$2,253,802	\$2,761,353
Operating Income (Loss)	\$183,187	\$15,691

Religious School

Energizing! Dynamic! Community! Resiliency! Creative! Adaptive!

These terms describe this phenomenal year in our vibrant Religious School. Even with the continuation of the pandemic, ours was a year of invigoration, creativity and depth. Despite the need to adapt and rethink strategies for learning, safety, and community building, we had a fabulous year together. Just ask our fantastic students, *madrachim* (teen aides) and teachers!

Whenever school was in session—whether on Zoom, on-site at the Temple, or in a hybrid mode—our classes vibrated with energy, curiosity, and Jewish pride. Our talented faculty worked tirelessly to provide high quality learning experiences. Our students engaged in multi-dimensional experiences that brought Judaism to life, exploring holidays, history, ethics, Bible, prayer, Israel, music, *tzedakah*, spirituality, Hebrew, and the arts. We learned how relevant and important Judaism is today, connecting our rich past while envisioning our next chapters together.

I am SO PROUD of our stunning Religious School faculty who expertly, lovingly, and passionately maintained the most positive attitudes through it all, demonstrating a contagious level of fortitude and positivity to our students.

We experienced so many highlights together: Our weekly large-group gatherings fostered a deeper knowledge and appreciation of our weekly Torah portion and holidays, as we very actively brought them to modern life. Many children reported that this was one of their favorite times in Religious School each week. Our students greatly expanded their repertoire of both traditional and newer, contemporary Jewish music during our weekly *T'fillah* and music sessions. What incredible *ruach* (spirit)!

We expanded our “walls” of Jewish learning by virtually visiting a variety of places, doing mitzvah projects and learning about various institutions that employ Jewish values in their work. We were able to do hands-on mitzvah projects (in-person & from afar) and truly bring Jewish values to life. We opened the virtual doors of Temple Sinai wide, welcoming in countless guest educators who helped to broaden our minds about the world around us, including Jewish veterans, homeless advocates, Judaic art specialists, Holocaust survivors, Israeli historians, social justice leadership and advocacy, and an array of other talented guest-teachers. Ask our students when you see them what their favorite parts of the year were!

We continued our odyssey of learning more and more about what the world of online learning can and should look like when it's done well. We turned the proverbial lemons into lemonade, and it ultimately turned out to be an exciting experiment to move our programming to a hybridized model, opening our eyes to the potential benefits of such a format.

In the coming school year, additional enhancements to our outstanding program will be implemented. Our Hebrew and Judaic Studies curricula are continually reviewed and refreshed, incorporating more strategies and content that best stimulates targeted learning and personal growth. We aspire to continually hone our professional skills and not rest on our laurels, as successful as our concluding year truly was. We look forward to sharing more details about new initiatives for the fall, and are excited to hear your voices as we continue to move forward in the area of Jewish education at Temple Sinai.

Gratitude abounds! Thank you to all of our parents, students, *Madrachim* and incredible teachers for your enthusiastic support of our very special Religious School and for your partnership in our shared sacred mission. Thank you to Joan Sherman, our hard-working and caring Administrative Assistant, for helping to hold us all up during a busy year. Thank you to Carlos and his fabulous custodial staff, for keeping our Temple so safe and clean. Thank you to Rabbi Millstein, Cantor Nitza, Joe Slade, Risa Tannenbaum, Anne-Marie Bennoun, Lynne Stewart and MANY other staff and lay leaders who worked absolutely tirelessly in support of our Religious School. We are so blessed. It is the people and relationships that make the Temple Sinai community so unique. I am so grateful that we share this common bond together, and look forward to deepening our connections further in the coming months and years.

With blessings for a wonderful summer to all,

Rabbi Beth Kramer-Mazer

Ritual

The Ritual Committee has continued to strive to fulfill its primary function of supporting our clergy in creating meaningful opportunities for worship and connection.

This year has continued to pose many challenges without the ability to meet in person. Through the extraordinary efforts of Rabbi Jordan Millstein, Rabbi Beth Kramer-Mazer, and Cantor Nitza Shamah, we have consistently maintained 40 – 50 devices for our Friday evening Shabbat service and an additional number on Facebook Live. Through continued efforts to engage, our goal is to translate this into increased attendance in person.

We have continued to conduct our Zoom Happy Hour and *Havdalah* every Saturday evening. While our numbers have been small, the connection provided has been meaningful for the attendees.

In consultation with clergy, the decision was made to cease our twice weekly *Minchah* service. However, other lecture and prayer opportunities were sought. We anticipate a continued expansion of participation in life cycle events as we look forward to our measured return to in-person gathering. We are actively engaged in maintaining the outreach Zoom has allowed and the ability to continue our connection with those who are less mobile. Our plans include creative ways to engage and re-engage additional segments of our community in our core functions of prayer and study.

Ritual Committee will strive to continue making meaningful contributions to our reopening, reengagement and reunion with our community.

Leny Davidson – Ritual Committee Chair

Sisterhood

It has been an unusual year for all of us and Temple Sinai Sisterhood is no exception. Although we had to meet virtually, we have been able to accomplish a great deal during the past year.

We had a virtual installation last June that was coordinated by Jessica Hirsch and Sari Hollender. The new Executive Board was installed and we began to work on a busy year, even during the pandemic.

Last summer, Cantor Nitza arranged for her cousin Anat Yahalom to speak about being wounded during the *Yom Kippur* war and her long journey to overcome her injuries. Everyone in attendance was transfixed. Later in the year Cantor Nitza and Rabbi Beth Kramer-Mazer led a *Rosh Chodesh Adar* program about *Purim*.

Even though members may have been isolating at home in September, there is no better way to welcome new members than with a “Welcome to Temple Sinai” bag, known as the Sisterhood *Challah* Blitz. We thank Eileen Pleva for delivering door to door, back when deliveries were the only way to see our members.

Sisterhood was able to continue our fund raising efforts this year. We sold flowers for the High Holy Days and had our most successful sale ever. The flowers made our homes look nicer even with small gatherings. And the flowers looked beautiful on Zoom!

We had our second annual collection of feminine hygiene products in the fall of 2020. This was coordinated by Jodi Bienenfeld. It was a little more complicated to collect these items as the Temple was closed, but with help from our security guard, George Kotakos & Hillary Hans, we collected some much needed items. The products were delivered to several local agencies: Bergen Family Center, Women’s Rights’ Information Center, Bergen Volunteer Medical Initiative and Center for Hope and Safety.

Last fall we held our Membership Brunch on Zoom, giving us the opportunity to see each other and to chat while looking at adorable pictures of our members when we were toddlers.

Once again we were present at Family Promise Shelter for a dinner although, like last spring, at the beginning of the pandemic, we raised funds for meals rather than cooking and serving at the shelter. Thank you to our tireless chairs, Marci Ginzburg, Karen Tubin, and Harriet Nachum. We raised enough funds to provide a meal to all those needing dinner. The extra funds were donated to a local community project designed to feed local people who were food insecure. We partnered through Family Promise and the Community Chest. Our ability to do this was due to the generosity and support of the entire Temple Sinai family. Thank you to all those who made a difference and helped those in need.

Hanukkah gift cards were sent to our college students, as we do annually. This was coordinated by Karen Miller. There was a *Hanukkah* cookie baking class, held on Zoom, and taught by Franci Steinberg. Cookie bakers of all ages were present, learning how to bake and decorate.

Pandemic or not, the annual *Shalach Manot* program was an incredible success, thanks to our supportive temple family. Many thanks to our Sisterhood treasurer, Franci Steinberg, for coordinating this project. Thanks to the more than 50 wonderful women who packed, and delivered 500 bags (filled with some sweets but also reusable kitchen items) in a socially distant way. Also, thanks to David Mager, a high school student, for delivering 50 bags to Jewish Family Services for Meals on Wheels. Through *Shalach Manot*, our temple community also raised \$1,400 for the Community Chest Winter Meal Program to help feed community members in need and to support local restaurants. And finally, we held a virtual *Hamentashen* baking class with Franci Steinberg teaching us to make the delicious holiday pastry.

Pesach is always a busy time for Sisterhood. The flower sales were led by Fundraising VPs Allie Beer and Meg Wolmer. We also had a new fundraiser, thanks to Talia Leschner, who baked delicious flourless chocolate cakes for the holiday. The money raised by these two *Passover* fund raisers went to purchase a chick incubator for the ECC and to pay for a special paper cutting program for the Religious School.

Sisterhood also contributed to the North Jersey Federation's Mega March Food Drive. This time food was collected at the homes of Jodi Bienenfeld and Jessica Hirsch and at Marlyn Friedberg's office. Federation reported a very successful food drive even during the pandemic.

For our final event of the year, we hosted an in-person installation and cocktail party on June 10th, with all attendees having been vaccinated! This was coordinated by Jessica and Sari, and held at the home of Hilary Baris with a "It's sweet to see you" themed evening.

The Sisterhood book discussion group continued during the past year with lively Zoom discussions of thought provoking books, led by our dedicated coordinator Lauren Rosenberg. We are scheduled for five discussions during the coming year.

UnionGrams and GoldenGrams are a way to send good wishes to families celebrating milestones and *mitzvot*. We thank Anne Fleischer for continuing to work on this program.

Sisterhood has many worthy programs, including fundraising. All of the money that we raise is donated back to Temple Sinai and community programs: Sisterhood provides the gifts for the B'nai Mitzvah students and the third grade siddurim gifts as well as all the Religious School gifts. We made gifts to the ECC and Religious School, paid off our last installment to the Capital Campaign pledge (a year early!). We funded singer Elana Arian at a beautiful *Shabbat* service. Sisterhood made a large contribution toward the gift bags given to members at the High Holy Days and we contributed to the cost of the *Shavuot* speaker, Rabbi Mark Sameth. We will be making a large contribution towards the cost of the updated sound system in the sanctuary in order to make our services better accessible to people who will be joining us from home. Our list of support for temple and community programs goes on and on.

Thank you to the Sisterhood Executive Board for being there in a challenging year.

- VP Programming Jessica Hirsch and Sari Hollender (stepping down from her role after many years)
- VP Fundraising Allie Beer and Meg Wolmer
- VP Noah Smalley (stepping down from her role after 3 years)
- VP Ritual and *Tikkon Olam*, Annice Benamy (stepping down from her role after 3 years)
- Treasurer, Franci Steinberg
- Secretary, Hilary Baris
- Advisory Board Peggy Kabakow, Ruth Seitelman, Sabra Waxman, Ilene Wechter

Thank you to the General Board members for continuing the creative programming, virtual classes and meetings and showing your smiling faces.

I invite all Temple Sinai women to join Sisterhood. There are many opportunities for learning, helping and participating. You will meet new women while supporting Temple Sinai and secular programs. Contact me to participate with questions and to suggest ideas.

Hilary Eth, Sisterhood President

High Holy Days 5782/2021

<i>Selichot</i>	Saturday, August 28
<i>Erev Rosh Hashanah</i>	Monday, September 6
<i>Rosh Hashanah Day 1</i>	Tuesday, September 7
<i>Rosh Hashanah Day 2</i>	Wednesday, September 8
<i>Kol Nidre</i>	Wednesday, September 15
<i>Yom Kippur</i>	Thursday, September 16
<i>Erev Sukkot</i>	Monday, September 20
<i>Sukkot</i>	Tuesday, September 21
<i>Sh'mini Atzeret/Simchat Torah</i>	Mon./Tues., September 27/28