

Letter for 2010/2011 Renewal

This has been a remarkable year for the congregants, clergy and staff of Temple Beth El. We continue to extend the “warmest welcome” through services, programs, classes and life cycle events in temporary quarters in the Shalom Park complex while watching our Temple home being transformed. The renovation and expansion project is on track and on budget. We anticipate being back into our completed Temple home by January 2011. Mark your calendar for the weekend of February 11, 2011 for the official celebration during the Rededication Weekend!

Our staff, clergy and Temple leadership have worked very hard to be sure this year of transition has run smoothly and our congregation continues to be well served. In all that it does, Temple Beth El aspires to be a K'hilah K'doshah, or holy community. Integral to this process are congregants, each of whom has a covenantal relationship with Temple that comprises an ongoing, mutual commitment to every other member of our community as well as to the community as a whole. The Temple has a responsibility to support and care for the congregation; and the congregation also has a responsibility to support and care for the Temple.

As the next fiscal year begins, we face a number of difficult realities. Nearly half of Temple Beth El's 1,100 congregant families annually pledge less than the designated amount for their membership category, resulting in more than \$500,000 in lost revenue for the Temple last year. There are always those in the congregation who are under distress and cannot fully meet their financial obligations – a scenario that has been exacerbated in recent years by economic conditions. We understand and will always welcome all, regardless of ability to meet their financial commitment. However, in its role as financial steward, the board has the responsibility to address this ongoing shortfall that challenges our congregation's long-term wellbeing. We are doing this in a number of ways:

1. Making sure the 2010 budget is as lean as possible. Temple staff, the board and finance committee have spent countless hours finding ways to trim.
2. Introducing a new graduated dues structure for those under age 32. Many young people who are beginning families and careers cannot afford full dues. This new rate structure will help remove this obstacle and encourage them become full members of the congregation.
3. Asking those who can to meet their full financial responsibilities. This commitment is incumbent in the covenantal relationship each of us has to help Temple's meet its ongoing operational needs. We thank you for doing so.
4. Working closely with those in need. With the help of Jewish Family Services (JFS), we are instituting a new process for screening requests for abatements on annual membership pledges, religious school registration or bar/bat mitzvah fees. If you need financial relief of any kind, we will ask you to provide an explanation and may ask you to meet with a JFS counselor. The process will be discreet, professional and highly confidential.

Your leadership team at Temple Beth El is working hard to make sure this remains a warm and welcoming place. We believe that each person is created B'tzelem Elohim, in the image of God;

to be treated with respect and understanding; and capable of making a unique contribution to the whole. The individual commits to supporting the ongoing vitality of the community; accepting there are times when the needs of the community take precedence over his or her needs, and vice versa. We need your engagement as a congregant and volunteer.

If you have any questions or comments about anything in this letter or otherwise, please contact me or our Executive Director, Sara Schreibman. On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, thank you for your continued support and the privilege of serving your family's spiritual and religious needs.

Moira Quinn Klein
Incoming President – TBE