

# ANNUAL REPORT 5778/2018



# TEMPLE EMANUEL

*Kindness • Compassion • Love*





Dear Friends,

*"Are you from Temple Emanuel?"*

This is the question our Ugandan friend Qwin asks whenever a stranger in Boston treats her with kindness. Why? Because when Qwin was granted asylum in June, our community rallied around her. One family invited her to live with them indefinitely. Others have offered her free medical care, counseling, coaching and transportation. She has been invited for meals and weekends. She has been given clothing and the supplies she needs to begin building her life. Because Qwin has experienced profound decency here, she assumes that anyone who treats her well must be from Temple Emanuel.

*Kindness. Compassion. Love.* That is what we try our best to do here every day. We connect people to a community that cares.

That is what we do for teens seeking friendship and support in an increasingly anxious world. That is what we do for adults looking for companionship, empty-nesters looking for the next meaningful chapter, parents looking for support, elders looking for community. Our community is named for a preposition, the word *with*. Our name, Emanuel, means God is *with* us. We try to be *with* one another.

But being with one another, especially in a splendidly diverse community like ours, requires resources. Early childhood education and family engagement take resources. Running a great religious school and a vibrant USY program takes resources. Sustaining weekly programming for our *L'Chaim* group for people in their 80s, 90s and 100s, running singles events, opening our doors to millennials, being a shul for all including those who cannot pay full dues—all of it takes resources.

Those resources do not come entirely from dues and high holiday seat revenue. In fact, 28% of the revenue for our annual budget comes from our Annual Appeal, which literally allows us to do what we do, and to be who we are. We can only be with you, and with one another, because of our Annual Appeal.

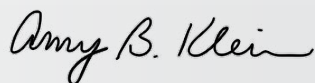
Recently a woman whose family had endured a health challenge wrote: *"Words cannot express my depth of gratitude for the love and support that flowed our way from our fellow congregants...I now know with every cell in my body what it means to be part of a genuine Jewish community."*

Thank you for your generosity. Because you are with us, we can continue to live out kindness, compassion and love in the year to come.

*Shana tovah u'metukah,*



Rabbi Wes Gardenswartz



Amy B. Klein, Co-Chair Annual Appeal



Mady Donoff, President



Adam Suttin, Co-Chair Annual Appeal

# Temple Emanuel Mission Statement

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

**Inspires** our members to a love of God, Torah and Israel;

**Builds** lasting relationships that provide each of us with strength and support in life's hard times, shared joy in life's good times, and friendship at all times;

**Transmits** a love of Jewish living from generation to generation; and

**Helps** our members make ordinary days holy by filling our lives with the *mitzvot* God has given us to make our lives matter.

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





## The Gate of Torah

The Talmud (Kiddushin 40B) reports a great debate among the sages: what is greater, learning or doing? Everyone's time is limited. If you have an hour to give, is it better to be in a class with a text, or in the world helping somebody? Rabbi Tarfon argued: doing good deeds is more important. Rabbi Akiva argued: learning Torah is more important. The sages came to a consensus: learning Torah is more important, because learning leads to doing.

In explaining this debate, the Talmudic commentator Rashi observed that if we learn Torah, we have two benefits. We learn Torah, and the Torah we learn changes our lives by inspiring us to do deeds.

The learning we do at Temple Emanuel, in our preschool, our religious school, our informal education, our family and adult education, Shabbat morning, Sunday morning, and weekdays, all yield important questions.

What difference does this Torah make in how you live your life? Does the Torah you learn increase your kindness, your compassion, your love?



*Kindness • Compassion • Love*





## The Gate of Prayer

In our *Etz Hayim chumash*, Rabbi Harold Kushner writes: "We cannot see God directly. We can only see the difference that God has made after the fact. We can recognize God's reality by seeing the difference God has made in people's lives."

So too with prayer, we can gauge the impact of prayer by seeing the difference prayer has made in people's lives.

- Gaining strength after a loss by coming to our daily minyan
- Celebrating a miraculous recovery or a joyful occasion
- Feeling supported and heard by the prayer for healing
- Reconnecting with friends at *kiddush* after Shabbat morning services
- Being filled with pride as we see our children and grandchildren take their place in the Jewish story
- Getting the emotional sustenance we need to go out and bring more kindness, more compassion, and more love into our world

We gather together in prayer so that we can see and feel God's impact in our lives.

*Kindness • Compassion • Love*





# The Gate of Israel

The prophet Isaiah charges us: "For the sake of Zion I will not be silent, For the sake of Jerusalem I will not be still." Seventy years after the miraculous creation of our Jewish homeland, how are we who live here in Newton to be faithful to these timeless words?

People who love Israel at Temple Emanuel, but do not live in Israel, engage with Israel.

Engagement means promoting an ongoing, passionate, respectful conversation about Israel, in all of its complexity, grounded in Jewish values: peace, self-preservation, justice, land, compromise, and the prophetic ideal that Israel be a light unto the nations. We may well agree to disagree on the issues of the day, but the conversation is suffused by these timeless Jewish values.

Engagement means going to Israel, a lot. This coming year we are sending three missions to Israel for learners at different ages and stages of life.

Engagement means listening to, and learning from, the many Israeli thought leaders across the political spectrum who come to 385 Ward Street to speak to us about our beloved homeland.

Engagement means speaking up for Israel in the public square, consistent with our principles.

If we are engaged in these ways, we will find our own way to express kindness, compassion and love for Israel.



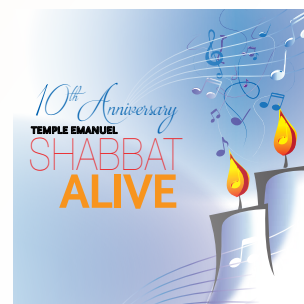
*Kindness • Compassion • Love*





## The Gate of Shabbat

Our teacher Micah Goodman has observed that our smart phones, iPads, and other screens make wonderful servants and terrible masters. They are wonderful servants if we can control when, how and why they are used. They are terrible masters if we can never turn them off. They are terrible masters if we are addicted to them. They are terrible masters if they get in the way of relationships with our friends and family whom we cannot see because our eyes are glued to those screens.



Shabbat has been around for thousands of years, but it has a new and renewed importance today. Shabbat can help us create a tech free zone, where our cells are off, our souls are on, our screens are out of the way, and we can see and connect more deeply with the people in our lives.

Shabbat deeply experienced brings more kindness, compassion and love to the people we love most.

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# The Gate of Redeeming Our World

If there is one voice that the biblical prophet Isaiah has no patience for, if there is one voice that the rabbis who made Isaiah the Haftarah on Yom Kippur have no patience for, it is the voice of one who says: What can I do? I am only one person. I am not an elected leader. I am not in law enforcement. I am not a business titan or a philanthropist. What can I, as one person, possibly do?

The answer of Isaiah is: you *can*, and therefore you *must*, make a difference. To somebody else. Speaking for God, Isaiah says:

*This is the fast I desire:*

*To unlock fetters of wickedness,  
And untie the cords of the yoke  
To let the oppressed go free;  
To break off every yoke.*

*It is to share your bread with the hungry*

*And to take the wretched poor into your home;  
When you see the naked, to clothe him,  
And not to ignore your own kin. (58:6-7)*

There is brokenness in the world, privation, poverty, suffering, people unseen, people on the margins.

We can, and our religious tradition teaches us that we must, step up. We must add to the quantum of kindness, compassion and love in the world. That is at the heart of what it means to be a Jew.



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## The Gate of Community

This summer the New York Times health reporter Jane E. Brody wrote a piece summing up social science research: "Social interaction is a critically important contributor to good health and longevity." Social isolation leads to loneliness and shorter lives. Being part of a loving community leads to longer and happier lives.

Our tradition has known this for a long time. The best of times, the worst of times, require being part of a community. You want to get married? A Jewish wedding requires at least a minyan, ten people present. Want to say *Kaddish*? We need a minyan.

Temple Emanuel channels our tradition's deep intuition about the need for community.

Whatever you are interested in—from learning, praying, and doing social justice, to knitting, playing softball, and socializing—there are friends at Temple Emanuel with whom you can share your interest and walk through life, together through the years.

Being part of the fabric of a community that cares adds kindness, compassion and love to your life, and allows you to add kindness, compassion and love to the lives of others.

*Kindness • Compassion • Love*





# The Gate of Teaching Jewish Values to Our Children

One of the most beautiful sights in the world is a picture we can never take. There can be no photograph. But it is unspeakably beautiful.

That is the picture of parents on the day of their child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah beaming as their child chants Torah and Haftarah and speaks to the congregation. Why do parents beam?

They beam because they take seriously and personally the sacred obligation of transmitting Jewish values from one generation to the next. This moment means the next generation is beginning to get it.

They beam because their children often speak of real impact they have had on the world through their mitzvah projects.

They beam because their children are optimistic, forces for good and hope. We are agents of repair, not agents of despair.

They beam because their children are beginning to sense that Torah and mitzvah will fill their lives with meaning, purpose and the deepest joy.

We all beam when we are part of a community where kindness, compassion and love are transmitted from generation to generation.



*Kindness • Compassion • Love*





## "Grow, grow."

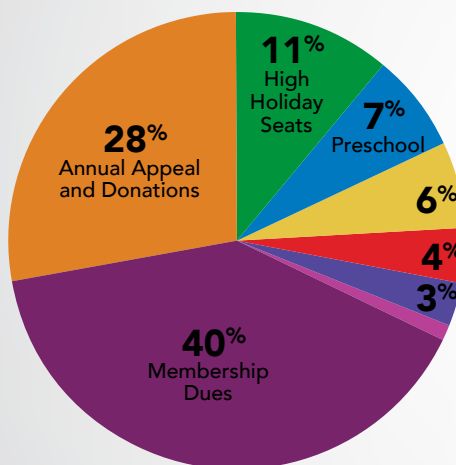
On virtually every Shabbat morning, four generations show up at Temple Emanuel. The youngest: a baby to be named, surrounded by parents, grandparents and if they are truly blessed, great grandparents. That baby will receive a free t-shirt as the newest member of Temple Emanuel. The oldest: our beloved seniors from Lasell Village, in their 80s, 90s, and 100s, who come every week.

Is there a unifying theme? Is there a common truth shared by all four generations?

A midrash teaches that behind every blade of grass, there is a special angel in heaven whispering encouragement: "Grow, grow."

That is who we are. We help all our members, all ages, all stages, grow in the ways they want to grow across all seven of our gates. *How can I deepen my commitment to Torah and mitzvah so that my life will have more meaning, purpose and joy?* That is our question.

That is also why our Annual Appeal is so important. To engage that question for all the members of our splendidly diverse community means that we are non-stop busy seven days a week, fifty-two weeks a year.



### REVENUE SOURCES

- Events and Kiddush Sponsorships 6%
- Religious School 4%
- Program Fees and Interest Income 3%
- Grants & Endowment 1%

*Your gift to our Annual Appeal gives us the resources to nurture learning and growing for all the members of our community every day. Your gift makes "Grow, grow." possible.*

As the pie chart shows, our Annual Appeal is the crucial determinant of our budget, comprising 28% of our revenue. Dues, seats and school tuitions alone cannot sustain all that we do, particularly because we offer abatements to members who cannot pay full dues and rely on our financial assistance; and to a growing segment of Next Generation members, young people just starting out, looking for community and meaningful connections. We can be a shul for all, we can encourage the membership of young families, and we can be active in all Seven Gates every day of the year, only because of our Annual Appeal.

After membership dues, our Annual Appeal and Donations are our single greatest source of revenue—and the slice of the pie with the greatest capacity to grow. Last year was the most successful Annual Appeal in our shul's history. Thank you for your record-breaking generosity.

May we do it again this year so that angels continue to whisper, to every blade of grass, and to every member, of every age and stage, "Grow, grow."



# Who We Are vs. Who We Want to Be

*Derekh Eretz.*

We learned at the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem this past summer that this phrase has two definitions—which contradict each other.

The literal meaning of *Derekh Eretz* is “the way of the land.” The way things are. Or as Bill Belichick would say: “It is what it is.” There are certain things we just have to accept, imperfect though they are.

But in Jewish sources *Derekh Eretz* also means possessing a character, a decency, a courtesy, that transcends the way things are. Here *Derekh Eretz* means reaching for what should be.

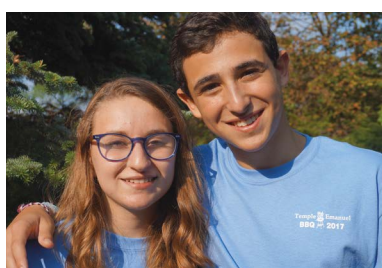
Navigating this tension between who we are and who we might become, between what is and what should be, is a central spiritual drama of life.

Our services, classes, programs, projects, outings, events, across our Seven Gates, all aim to inspire us to change what is into what ought to be; to change who we are into who we should become. *Our mission is to change lives. To make us into the very best version of ourselves.*

Because we are so splendidly diverse, in order to reach all the people in our community, we need to plan and run a broad variety of services, classes, programs, projects, outings and events. One size does not fit all. But that broad variety, running 365 days a year, takes a lot of resources.

On these pages, we want to thank all of you who contribute your resources so that we can run a shul of excellence, relevance and vibrancy that fulfills our mission of turning what is into what ought to be, and of turning who we are into who we might yet become.

If our noblest angels actually emerge into the world, we have you to thank.





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### And for Graphic Design to

The Fenway Group



Temple Emanuel welcomes the participation of interfaith couples and families, and people of all abilities, backgrounds, races, ethnicities, sexual orientations and gender identities.





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