

## Rabbi's Report –Board Meeting

December 14, 2017

- The Board need to set my parsonage allowance at this Board meeting for CY 2018. As in past years, I am requesting that my parsonage amount be set at \$19,000. This is in consonance with current IRS guidelines for clergy.
- I have signed and returned the contract to Robyn Helzner for her January 22 program in Las Cruces.
- Mazal Tov to Michael Bruder on becoming Bar Mitzvah. Joshua Rosenberg, son of Julie Rosenberg and Aaron Flores, will become Bar Mitzvah on December 30. Dates have been set for Kaila Brown (May 26), Derek Hyman (June 2) and Hannah Saltman (June 30).
- Our annual Interfaith conversation program, "People of Character: What does it take to be a mensch?" on Sunday, November 19 brought 40 people to Temple for substantive presentations on values that help create good character and enlightening small group discussions.
- I am revising the Chanukah service from past years and will have the new version ready for tomorrow night.
- I have a chapter included in the new book from CCAR Press, HONORING TRADITION, EMBRACING MODERNITY, which is intended as a text for Introduction to Judaism classes. My piece is based on my blog post about the wedding of Adam and Juli, that was revised by Kate Bigam Kaput of the URJ staff and run on the Reformjudaism.org blog 2 years ago.
- The Union for Reform Judaism Biennial Convention in Boston, Massachusetts on December 6-10 was a very rewarding and worthwhile experience. I attended sessions on these topics:
  - 1) Expect the Unexpected: New Insights from Diverse Jewish Sources – 4 Professors at HUC-JIR offered brief lessons on why people turns to Psalms in times of crisis, medieval Jewish texts that touched upon Muhammed, the importance of minority opinions in Judaism; and how Judaism is intrinsically, and thankfully, a complex religion.
  - 2) Prophetic roots of modern Social Action – passages from ancient prophets that have relevance today
  - 3) Music for a new reality – a presentation of new social justice songs by the composers.
  - 4) How to embrace and honor a diversity of political voices in the Reform movement in and congregations.
  - 5) Consensus Decision-Making (focusing on whether a particular decision is in the best interests of the congregation).

- 6) Taking a Stand – two HUC-JIR professors spoke about their projects that presented religious viewpoints in a public forum, one being Dr. Andrea Weiss and the "American Values/Religious Voices" campaign.
  - 7) When Hate Comes to Town- National ADL director Jonathan Greenblatt and Rabbi Tom Gutherz of Congregation Beth Israel in Charlottesville, VA spoke about the demonstrations in Charlottesville in August and how they were handled by the congregation and community, and what we should do in our communities if we face such a challenge.
  - 8) Shabbat luncheon talk with Bruce Feiler on his book, THE FIRST LOVE STORY: ADAM, EVE AND US.
  - 9) I went on a "field trip" to the JFK Presidential Library and Museum to begin my convention experience on December 6.. It was simply amazing to be there. They pulled a Torah out of storage that was presented to President Kennedy in 1961 by Rabbi Maurice Eisendrath, then head of the Reform movement. There were other highlights as well.
  - 10) The services and large gatherings were very inspiring and meaningful.
  - 11) Rabbi Joe Black (Congregation Emanuel, Denver) and Cantor Susie Lewis Friedman (Beth Emet The Free Synagogue, Evanston, IL) both told me that they are each using one of my original songs in their High Holy Day worship and at other times as well.
  - 12) And yes, it was good to be at the biennial with family members present.
- I plan to attend the Pacific Association of Reform Rabbis convention in Palm Springs on January 7-11. I will be joining Rabbi Harry Rosenfeld of Congregation Albert in Albuquerque in leading the service on Thursday morning.
  - I will be going to New York, along with Rhonda, for our daughter-in-law Juli's rabbinic ordination service on Sunday, May 6, 2016 in New York City.
  - I continue to keep in touch with congregants in the process of treatment, recuperation and healing.
  - There will be Havdalah and a minyan/service of remembrance for Willie Pass on Saturday night, December 16, at 5:30 pm at Temple.
  - I continue to coordinate a monthly clergy breakfast on the third Thursday of the month. I am serving as Executive Advisor on the NMSU Interfaith Council this year. I attend a noon interreligious study group on Fridays that is discussion the book *Constantine's Sword*, by James Carroll (on hiatus until January).